

■ *The Bhakti Sect of Vallabhācārya*

RICHARD BARZ

MUNSHI RAM
MANOHAR LAL


The Bhakti Sect of Vallabhācārya



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One of the foremost leaders of the devotional revolution which swept through Hindu society in the 15th and 16th centuries was Vallabhācārya. In terms of religion, Vallabhācārya's main contribution was his demonstration of the way in which a human being can shed his or her limited, mortal ego in order to rediscover an eternal individual participation in an unlimited divine being. With regard to literature, some of the earliest prose writing in any form of Hindi was produced by Vallabhācārya's followers in the *Caurāsi Vaiṣṇavan ki Vārtā*, a collection of accounts of personal efforts to apply the teachings of Vallabhācārya to everyday life.

The first part of the *Bhakti Sect of Vallabhācārya* deals with Vallabhācārya's life and with his establishment of an organisation for his followers, a philosophical system to explain his view of the world and a spiritual method for putting his teachings into practice. The second part of the book is made up of an English translation of the sections of the *Caurāsi Vaiṣṇavan ki Vārtā* describing the lives of four early disciples of Vallabhācārya, one of whom was the poet Sūradāsa.

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The Bhakti Sect of Vallabhācārya

Richard Barz



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Preface

THE BEGINNINGS OF this book, which originates from my doctoral dissertation to the Department of South Asian Languages and Civilizations at the University of Chicago, lie in a series of courses in the literature of Braj Bhāṣā and related Hindi dialects which I took under the direction of Professors S.M. Pandey, D.P.S. Dwarikesh, and Norman H. Zide at the University of Chicago during the years 1963–1966. Through those courses I was first introduced to the *Caurāsi Vaiṣṇavan ki Vārtā*, the text upon which this study is based. Further progress would have been impossible without the Fulbright-Hays-National Defence Foreign Language Fellowships which I received for study in India. Among the scholars and *bhaktas* with whom I was able to meet in India, I owe especial thanks to Dr. Govardhannath Shukla and Dr. Vishvanath Shukla, both of the Department of Hindi, Aligarh Muslim University and Mr. Shyam Manoharji Goswamy of Bhuleshwar, Bombay. With the aid and encouragement of Professors K.C. Bahl, J.A.B. van Buitenen, Pramod Chandra, Edward C. Dimock, A.K. Ramanujan, and N.H. Zide, all of the University of Chicago, the study was brought to its present form. These acknowledgements would not be complete without thanks to my wife Kari for her unselfish help both in the United States and in India.

Table of Transliteration

Devanāgarī	Roman	Devanāgarī	Roman
अ	a	थ	th
आ	ā	व	d
ओ	i	ध	dh
उ	ī	न	n
ऊ	u	प	p
ऋ	ū	भ	ph
ऋ	r	म	b
ऋ	e	य	bh
ओ	ai	॒	m
औ	o	॑	y
॒ (अनुस्वार : nasal) : (visarga)	au	॒	r
क्	n	॑	l
ख्	h	॒	v
ग्	k	॑	sh
ঁ	kh	ঁ	s
ঁ	g	ঁ	s
ঁ	gh	ঁ	h
ঁ	ñ	ঁ	d
ঁ	c	ঁ	dh
ঁ	ch	ঁ	k
ঁ	j	ঁ	kh
ঁ	jh	ঁ	g
ঁ	ñ	ঁ	z
ঁ	t	ঁ	f
ঁ	th	ঁ	ks
ঁ	d	ঁ	jñ
ঁ	dh		
ঁ	n		
ঁ	t		

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PART I

Vallabhācārya, His Teachings and His Sect

Introduction

IN THE FALL of 1963 I was first introduced to that strange and impassioned approach to the divine that is called in India the *bhaktimārga*, "the way of devotion." My introduction was, appropriately, through the Braj Bhāṣa poetry of the *Sūrasāgara* of Sūradāsa (A.D. 1479–1584), a North Indian poet (see pp. 105–139 of Part II below for the traditional account of Sūradāsa's life) who, by all accounts, expressed the ideals of the *bhaktimārga* with an intensity of feeling and a mastery of the language that is still unsurpassed by any poet in any dialect of Hindi, medieval or modern. Of all guides to the *bhaktimārga*, Sūradāsa was without doubt the best; yet, though Sūradāsa's poetry was interesting, I did not really at first find it appealing. It had a fascination for me that could not be called a fascination of delight. On the surface, the content of the poetry was not unusual when considered in terms of Indian literature. It related the incidents in the life of Shrī Krṣṇa during his incarnation on earth in Braj, the region around the city of Mathurā in the modern Indian state of Uttar Pradesh, in the remote past shortly before the outbreak of the great war described in the *Mahābhārata*. That part of Shrī Krṣṇa's life which was spent with the cowherds (*gopās*) ruled by King Nanda was obviously for Sūradāsa the most important and significant period of Shrī Krṣṇa's career and it was on that part that he lavished his poetic skill. It amounted to a retelling in Braj Bhāṣā, the vernacular language of the western Gangā-Yamunā Doāb, of the events narrated in the tenth book of the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*, which was, like all of the *purāṇas*, written in Sanskrit. To this point, Sūradāsa's poetry presented no difficulty. It was simply a literary manifestation of the movement of North Indian *bhakti* religion away from the Sanskritic tradition, which was closed to all but a small elite, and toward the vernacular tradition of the ordinary people. There was nothing startling for me in this. But Sūradāsa's poetry was far more than just a retelling of events that were probably already familiar in some form in North Indian folk literature.

Behind the poetry of Sūradāsa's *Sūrasāgara* there was clearly a powerful force of emotion, a deep thrill with even the least significant action of Shri Kṛṣṇa. I could understand a preoccupation with Shri Kṛṣṇa's exploits against demons—for example, his slaying of the child-killer Pūtanā or his conquest of the terrible serpent Kāliya—but, rather than dwelling on scenes such as those, Sūradāsa seemed to find his greatest pleasure in composing verses describing scenes like the following:

Mother Yashodā is teaching Kṛṣṇa to walk.

When he falters he catches on to her fingers and he sets his tottering feet on the floor.

Sometimes she looks at his face, clasps him to her heart and considers herself blessed.

Sometimes she beseeches her family gods for his long life.

Sometimes she calls upon Baldeva to play with Kṛṣṇa in the yard.

Sūradāsa says this is the sport (*līlā*) of Kṛṣṇa in which Nanda, full of glory, feels ecstasy.¹

It was very difficult for me to develop a feeling for, an empathy with, this kind of poetry; and it was this kind of poetry that was at the heart of the *Sūrasāgara*. This type of poetry was of the very essence of the *bhaktimārga*.

Later, in the course of my study of Hindi literature at the University of Chicago, I began reading from the *Caurāśī Vaiṣṇavan kī Vārtā*, a work in Braj Bhāṣā prose attributed to Gokulanātha (lived A.D. 1551–1647) but put into its present form by Harirāya (lived A.D. 1591–1716).² Through my reading in the *Caurāśī Vaiṣṇavan kī Vārtā*, I discovered just why it was that I had not been able to appreciate properly the content of the *Sūrasāgara* and why it was that I had found peculiar the stress placed by Sūradāsa on the type of scene illustrated by the verse from *Sūrasāgara* quoted above. I had been put off by Sūradāsa's poetry because it did not emphasize in the way that I had expected the episodes in the life of Shri Kṛṣṇa on earth. Rather than describing events, Sūradāsa was interested in evoking vivid scenes, in freezing forever the feelings of an instant—whether that of the moment of the infant Kṛṣṇa's first steps, or that of the attempts of Kṛṣṇa's mother Yashodā to wean him, or that of Kṛṣṇa's setting to his lips the bamboo flute that beguiles the

¹S. M. PANDEY and N. H. ZIDE, "The Poems of Surdas" (unpublished, Chicago : University of Chicago, 1963), poem no. 29. The text of the above poem is also available, without English translation, in : Sūradāsa, *Sūrasāgara*, ed. NANDADULĀRE VĀJĀPEYĪ (2 vols. ; Vārānasī : Nāgarīpracāriṇī Sabhā, 1965), I, 300.

²HARAHARINĀTHA TANDANA, *Vārtā-Sāhitya* (Aligarh : Bhārata Prakāshana Mandira, 1961), pp. 121–122.

hearts of the women of Braj. The purpose behind Sūradāsa's concern with the emotion aroused by the word-image of an event, rather than with the function of an event in a narrative whole or with its relationship to the events that precede it and those that follow it, becomes clear when his poetry is considered in the light shed by the *Caurāśī Vaiṣṇavan kī Vārtā*.

The *Caurāśī Vaiṣṇavan kī Vārtā* is a collection of eighty-four *vārtās*—a *vārtā* is an account, a report, or a story of something or someone—each one of which relates selected events of spiritual import in the life of one of the eighty-four chief followers of Vallabhācārya, an important philosopher who established his own particular version of the *bhaktimārga* in North India during the first third of the sixteenth century. These *vārtās* are not considered to be mere legends, but are held by the followers of Vallabhācārya's version of the *bhaktimārga* to be true accounts of actual persons and real episodes that played definite roles in the unfolding of Vallabhācārya's spiritual revelation. Gokulanātha, to whom credit is given for the gathering together of the eighty-four *vārtās*, was the grandson of Vallabhācārya and was himself an important and vigorous leader of those who followed the teachings of Vallabhācārya in his time; and Harirāya, who organized the *vārtās* into their present form and added to them the commentaries called the *bhāvaprakāsha*, was one of the major interpreters of the doctrines of Vallabhācārya. No follower of Vallabhācārya's form of the *bhaktimārga* could doubt the veracity and spiritual applicability of the *vārtās* gathered and arranged by Gokulanātha and Harirāya. Among the *vārtās* of the eighty-four Vaiṣṇavas who were set by Vallabhācārya upon the *bhaktimārga*, is the *vārtā* of Sūradāsa the author of the *Surasāgara*. A complete translation of the Sūradāsa's *vārtā*, along with a translation of the *vārtās* of three of his colleagues in the *bhaktimārga* of Vallabhācārya, follows in Part II of this study.

Sūradāsa's *vārtā*, like the other *vārtās*, is made up of a series of vignettes—each of which is called a *prasaṅga*—each one a separate little story independent and distinct from the others. The *prasaṅgas* are linked together to form a unified *vārtā* by the personality of Sūradāsa and by the chronology of his life from his initiation by Vallabhācārya into the *Sampradāya* (sect) of those who were following Vallabhācārya's particular guidelines to the *bhaktimārga* up to his passing from his earthly existence. The events of Sūradāsa's life before his meeting with Vallabhācārya are supplied by the *bhāvaprakāsha* commentary added by Harirāya, who, some seventy-five to a hundred years after the passing of Sūradāsa, composed his commentaries on the basis of oral traditions passed down within Vallabhācārya's *Sampradāya*. In the *prasaṅgas* of Sūradāsa's *vārtā*, Sūradāsa, as would be expected from his reputation, appears

as a man blessed with an extraordinary poetic talent. But Sūradāsa is not presented in these *prasaṅgas* as being primarily a poet; Sūradāsa is presented as being first of all a very special *sevaka* of Shri Goverdhananāthaji, who is the true *svarūpa*, or entity, of Bhagavān Shri Kṛṣṇa. What exactly is meant in Vallabhācārya's *Sampradāya* by the term *sevaka* will be explained in detail shortly. For now, it is enough to say that, as a *sevaka* of Bhagavān Shri Kṛṣṇa, Sūradāsa had completely given up all thought of himself and of any possession or pleasure or skill that he might formerly have claimed for himself and had devoted himself and those former possessions, pleasures, and skills utterly, without exception, to the *sevā* (service) of Shri Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Being. Certainly, one of the most important of Sūradāsa's gifts set before Shri Kṛṣṇa was his poetic skill and it is the result of Sūradāsa's dedication of his poetic ability to Shri Kṛṣṇa that the *Sūrasāgara* exists today. The *Sūrasāgara* is part of Sūradāsa's *sevā* of Shri Kṛṣṇa. The production of the *Sūrasāgara* was not, to be sure, a commonplace sort of *sevā*, but was a *sevā* of the highest value for the full expression of Vallabhācārya's *bhaktimārga* and for the introduction of the attitudes of that *bhaktimārga* into the hearts of the people of that constantly expanding area of North India into which Braj Bhāṣā was spreading as a vehicle for the communication of religious ideals and emotions. This is so because the *Sūrasāgara* made the essential message of the *Bhāgavata Purāna*—as that message was conceived by Vallabhācārya—available in charming and vivid verse in a language which was understood by, or which was understandable to, a large segment of the North Indian population; and it was of critical importance to Vallabhācārya and to those who followed his teachings that the message of the *Bhāgavata Purāna* be made available to the general population.

Vallabhācārya was an orthodox Hindu philosopher and teacher; he accepted the claim held by the orthodox that the Vedic literature, the *shruti* or what was heard directly from the divine source by the earliest sages and passed down orally from generation to generation, was the immortal expression of sacred truth, eternally valid and free of change. All of the truth, all of the wisdom that man needed was contained in the *Vedas*. But there was a catch; again according to the orthodox Hindu thought accepted by Vallabhācārya, the world and its human life begins deteriorating in quality from the moment of the beginning of each of the never-ending cycles of world-manifestation until by the time of the disastrous *Kali Yuga*, the fourth and final period of each world-cycle, things are in such deplorable condition that human beings are no longer able to comprehend the truths of the Vedic literature and are condemned to stagger and reel under the burdens of their own ignorance and delusion to the moment of the dissolution of the universe at the end of the world-

cycle. Still, even though men could no longer in the *Kali Yuga* understand the teachings of the Vedas, all was not quite lost. Bhagavān Shri Kṛṣṇa, the *Parabrahman*, the Supreme and Only Being, in his compassion (*kṛpā*) and grace (*anugraha*), had revealed himself from time to time on earth for the assistance of man. The fullest of his self-revelations, or *avatāras*, occurred when he appeared just before the famous Mahābhārata War as the lover of the cowherd women (*gopīs*) and killer of the demon king of Mathurā, Kansa, in order to restore and protect righteousness on earth and to teach the practice of the *bhaktimārga*, the only sure means to truth in times of diminishing human abilities and worsening physical environment. The record of the actions of Shri Kṛṣṇa during this fullest of his self-revelations, the actions which exemplify the practice of the *bhaktimārga*, is given in the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* written in Sanskrit. Most modern scholars date the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* in its present form at about the tenth century.¹ And few would put it any earlier than the sixth century.² The consensus of scholarly opinion is that in its final form the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* is probably the work of some group or community of Brāhmaṇas probably living in the Tamil-speaking region of South India. The legends making up the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* must have long been current in the folk literature of India, since some of them—the legends of the play of Shri Kṛṣṇa with the gopis, for example—crop up in written literature as different as the *Silappadikāram*, a Tamil epic poem written sometime between the second and the fifth centuries,³ and the impassioned devotional poetry of the Tamil poetess Āṇḍäl⁴ who belonged to the Tamil Ālavār tradition and lived during the first half of the eighth century. Other important themes in the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*, as, for example, the childhood play of Shri Kṛṣṇa in Braj which was so fascinating for Sūradāsa, also appear in the *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* of the third or fourth century.⁵ That the worship of the god Bhagavān Shri Kṛṣṇa as the Supreme Being existed well before the beginning of the Christian era of dating can hardly be doubted. By the time of the composition of the *Bhagavad Gitā* (probably in completed form by the first century B.C.), Shri Kṛṣṇa certainly had followers who accepted him as the Supreme God.

All of the above discussion of the dating of the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*

¹SURENDRANATH DASGUPTA, *A History of Indian Philosophy* (5 vols.; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1961), Vol. IV, p. 1.

²VISHVANĀTHA SHUKLA, *Hindi Kṛṣṇa Bhakti Kāvya par Shrimadbhāgavata kā Prabhāva* (Aligarh: Bharata Prakashana Mandira, 1966), pp. 15–17.

³ILANGŌ ADIGAL, *Shilappadikaram*, trans. ALAIN DANIELOU (New York: New Directions, 1965), pp. 112–121.

⁴MALIK MOHAMMAD, Ālavār Bhakton kā Tamil-Prabandham aur Hindi Kṛṣṇa-Kāvya (Āgrā: Vinoda Pustaka Mandira, 1964), pp. 118, 200–201.

⁵SHUKLA, *Hindi Kṛṣṇa Bhakti*, p. 17.

would be, of course, completely unnecessary for Vallabhācārya or for any other Vaiṣṇava follower of the *bhaktimārga*. For such people the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* dated from the time of Shri Kṛṣṇa's appearance on earth—or, perhaps, existed eternally before that time since the *līlā* or divine play performed by Shri Kṛṣṇa in the earthly land of Braj was but a manifestation of the divine, eternal *līlā* that Shri Kṛṣṇa performs without beginning and without end in the supernatural, changeless Braj that is called “Goloka”—and its value lies in the perfect teaching for man lost in the *Kali Yuga* which it contains. Vallabhācārya exalts the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* as the final scriptural authority to which men may resort in this *Kali Yuga* when he says in his *Tattvadīpa Nibandha* that any doubts that one may have with regard to the teachings of the *Vedas* may be dispelled by reference to the words of Shri Kṛṣṇa, especially as they are found in the *Bhagavad Gītā*; Vallabhācārya goes on to say that if there are any difficulties with the words of Kṛṣṇa, then one should go for help to the *Brahma Sūtras* of Vyāsa; but, if one is faced with doubts that arise from the *Brahma Sūtras*, then one must rely upon the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* for a solution to the problem and there can be no authority to be consulted beyond the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*.¹ The great importance of the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* for Vallabhācārya and his followers is its presentation of the *bhaktimārga*, its expression of *bhaktibhāva*, the delightful experience of the emotion of love-permeated, selfless devotion to Bhagavān Shri Kṛṣṇa. It is that *bhaktibhāva* that places the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* in the first place among all the scriptures available to men in the *Kali Yuga* and it is only by means of that *bhaktibhāva* that Vallabhācārya offers any sure hope to men for escape from the bondage of ignorance. It is no wonder, then, that Sūradāsa's transmission of the *bhaktibhāva* of the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* over to his own *Sūrasāgara* written in a vernacular language understandable over a wide area was a contribution of such great importance for Vallabhācārya and his *Sampradāya*. Through the *Sūrasāgara*, *bhaktibhāva* would take root among the people and those who were ready to embark on the *bhaktimārga* would be attracted to the *Sampradāya* of Vallabhācārya.

It would not, however, be fair or correct to consider the *Sūrasāgara* of Sūradāsa a work undertaken as a part of a conscious programme of proselytization. It is certainly true that during the time of Vallabhācārya and his immediate successors to the leadership of the *Sampradāya* new members were constantly being sought for the *Sampradāya* all over North India from Orissa in the east to Gujarat and Sindh in the west; it is also true that the verses of the *Sūrasāgara* were being spread by devotees (*bhaktas*) of Bhagavān Shri Kṛṣṇa over a wide area of North

¹DASGUPTA, *History of Indian Philosophy*, Vol. IV, p. 346.

India and as the verses spread so must have spread also the fame of Vallabhācārya's *Sampradāya*. But it is important not to lose sight of the fact that all of this was a secondary effect, at least as far as Sūradāsa himself was concerned, of the writing—or, rather, of the composing, since Sūradāsa was blind—of the *padas* that have gone to make up the *Sūrasāgara*. The primary effect of the *padas* for Sūradāsa must have been the extent to which they fulfilled his obligation (*dharma*) to perform *sevā* for Bhagavān Shri Kṛṣṇa in his child-*svarūpa* called Shri Govardhananāthaji. When Sūradāsa was initiated by Vallabhācārya into the *Sampradāya*, he was given the duty of singing *kīrtana*—hymns of praise—before the *svarūpa* (a divine image is never in Vallabhācārya's *Sampradāya* referred to as a *mūrti*—representation, image—as would be the ordinary Hindu usage, but is always called a *svarūpa*—the divine entity itself, not just a likeness of it) of Shri Govardhananāthaji. Later, when the *Sampradāya* was under the guidance of Vallabhācārya's younger son Viṭṭhalanātha, Sūradāsa's *kīrtana* singing was formally integrated into the daily periods of worship in the temple of Shri Govardhananāthaji. The *kīrtanas* sung by Sūradāsa were those of his own composition and many of them were the same verses that are gathered into his massive *Sūrasāgara*.

There is still much more to the *Sūrasāgara* than a collection of verses which were composed to be sung before the Shri Govardhananāthaji *svarūpa* and which form, when considered as a whole, a re-expression of the *bhaktibhāva* of the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*. The notable factor that remains to be taken into account in considering the *Sūrasāgara* or any other piece of early literature produced by initiates belonging to Vallabhācārya's *Sampradāya*—including the *Caurāśī Vaiṣṇavan kī Vārtā* itself—is the nature of the inspiration that lay within the hearts of the authors of that literature. It is in this factor of inspiration that I realized the reason why Sūradāsa's verses had struck me as so peculiar in concern and so difficult to appreciate in content. Sūradāsa's poetry impressed me as being peculiar, and, in fact, it was meant to be peculiar. Its concern was not closely related to the ordinary concerns of poetic literature and its purpose was intentionally unrelated to that of usual literature. The reason for this wilful separation that Sūradāsa made between his poetry and ordinary poetry was the severance that had already divided Sūradāsa from the concerns of the kind of life that he had led before his contact with Vallabhācārya. This severance that appears in both life and poetry will be the primary subject of discussion in the chapters that follow. The severance can be summed up in two Sanskrit words, both of which occur regularly in the literature of Vallabhācārya's *Sampradāya*—*laukika* and *alaukika*—but it can probably never be explained or even described fully. Vallabhācārya did not originate this severance, though he contri-

buted a new angle of approach to it; nor is this severance confined in its appearance to any particular place or time, though concern with it here will naturally revolve around the sect of *bhakta-sevakas* established in the early 16th century and centred at the holy hill at Govardhana for the purpose of bringing, with Vallabhācārya and his direct male descendants as intermediaries, human souls (*jīvas*) into direct relationship with the divine. The severance that is so vital to Vallabhācārya and to those who have followed his teachings and which can be summed up by the two words *laukika* and *alaukika* can best be examined by returning to the inspiration that lay behind Sūradāsa's poetry. The term *laukika* cannot be precisely defined in English, though a close approach to its meaning can be obtained through a brief look into its genealogy. *Laukika* is derived from the Sanskrit noun *loka* which has the basic meaning of an intermediate space that is conceived of as being an entity in its own right and which is, progressively and at the same time, an area, a region, a world, the world, the earth, the conglomerate of living beings and nonliving material that is our world. Starting from this last meaning of *loka*, *laukika* is that which—whether animate or inanimate—is associated with or proceeds from the world, that which is common, ordinary, or according to custom, that which belongs to the everyday life of human beings, that which is profane.¹ These meanings all determine the sense of *laukika* in the literature, Braj Bhāṣā as well as Sanskrit, of Vallabhācārya's *Sampradāya*. The word *alaukika*, on the other hand, signifies the absence of the *laukika*. *Alaukika* signifies that which is uncommon, extraordinary, or supernatural, that which is removed from the ordinary life of human beings, that which is sacred.² The opposition between the *laukika* and the *alaukika* is the distinction between the life of Sūradāsa before he received initiation into the *Sampradāya* of Vallabhācārya and his life after he had entered the *Sampradāya* and begun the journey along that version of the *bhaktimārga* called the *Puṣṭimārga* that was revealed by Vallabhācārya; the distance between the *laukika* and the *alaukika* is exactly the distance created by that severance that separates the poetry of the *Surasāgara*, which is *alaukika* poetry composed under *alaukika* inspiration, from ordinary *laukika* poetry composed as a result of *laukika* inspiration. *Alaukika* poetry may arouse an *alaukika* response—for, according to the teaching of Vallabhācārya, the *alaukika* lies dormant within every individual—and that, to be sure, is part of the purpose of all *alaukika* literature either in prose or in verse. Though it may be interpreted according to *laukika* standards, *alaukika* literature

¹ MONIER-MONIER-WILLIAMS, *A Sanskrit-English Dictionary* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1960), pp. 906, 909.

² *ibid.*, p. 95.

cannot yield its true beauty nor can it exercise its fullest impact unless it is heard through *alaukika* ears or read through *alaukika* eyes. Finally, in order to make a beginning of real appreciation of *alaukika* literature, one must realize that it is *alaukika* and one must understand that such literature has an orientation that is altogether different from that of the *laukika*. My difficulty in developing an emotional contact with the poetry of Sūradāsa was to a great extent simply the outcome of my efforts to force Sūradāsa's poetry into the same *laukika* plane on which I was operating. Only after I had begun to read seriously in the *Caurāsi Vaiṣṇavan kī Vārtā* and after I had started to develop a feeling for the *alaukika* principles behind the *Puṣṭimārga*, was I able to approach the *Sūrasāgara* with much enthusiasm.

The above discussion of the *laukika* and the *alaukika* with regard to the *Sūrasāgara* has left one very interesting question still unanswered: How did Sūradāsa manage to infuse so much of his poetry with the *alaukika* in a manner that those who are capable of enjoying the *alaukika* have found so superb? The answer to this question lies nowhere but in the presence of the *alaukika* in Sūradāsa's own life. There is no doubt that Sūradāsa's material, the *līlā* of Bhagavān Shri Kṛṣṇa in Braj, is the very essence of the *alaukika* and that the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* in which these *līlās* are described is a scripture saturated with the *alaukika*. The *bhakti-bhāva* that is the heart of the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* is certainly *alaukika bhāva*. But more than *alaukika* material was required to transplant intact that *alaukika* material from the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* into the *Sūrasāgara*. The life of the transplanter must have been an *alaukika* life lived in an *alaukika* environment; every action, every thought conscious or subconscious had to be imbued with the *alaukika* in order for the transplanter to perform his task. According to the traditions that were passed down in the *Sampradāya* and that appear in the initial *bhāvaprakāsha* (which means literally the explanation of the particular situation or emotional state that underlies the events of a *prasaṅga* or of a whole *vārtā*) to the *vārtā* of Sūradāsa in the *Caurāsi Vaiṣṇavan kī Vārtā*, the life of Surādāsa together with all of his actions and thoughts—after Sūradāsa had entered into Vallabhācārya's *Sampradāya*—were *alaukika* to the ultimate degree. It is said in that *bhāvaprakāsha* that Sūradāsa did not just hear of the *līlās* of Bhagavān Shri Kṛṣṇa and then describe them in his poetry out of a merely intellectual acquaintance with them, but that Sūradāsa actually experienced in person, the divine, timeless *līlās* performed by Shri Kṛṣṇa and then described them in his poetry from his own first-hand experience. Sūradāsa, in short, had reached—while living in an earthly, *laukika* body—an *alaukika* level of existence at which he was able to enjoy the inexpressible bliss of direct, face-to-face companionship with Bhagavān Shri Kṛṣṇa and at which he was able to

witness the *līlas* of Shri Kṛṣṇa as an actual participant in them.

The *bhāvaprakāsha* to Sūradāsa's *vārtā* makes clear that Sūradāsa did not always realize his *alaukika* identity. He was born into an ordinary *laukika* Brāhmaṇa family in a village near Delhi and he led a *laukika* life, completely unaware of the *alaukika* existence which he had enjoyed before his birth on earth, until he was discovered by Vallabhācārya who recognized his true identity as a *daivījīva* (a divine soul) and initiated him by means of the *Brahmasambandha* mantra (the mantra which connects one with the Supreme Being) and instructed him in the practice of the *Puṣṭimārga*. Sūradāsa soon realized, by the grace (*anugraha*) of Bhagavān, his true, *alaukika* identity which was that of one of the eight companions (*asṭasakhā*) that are never apart from Bhagavān Shri Kṛṣṇa. As one of the *sakhās*, Sūradāsa continued throughout the rest of his life on earth to do the *sevā* of Shri Kṛṣṇa's *svarūpa* on earth, Shri Govardhananāthajī. Some of his *alaukika* experiences as the *sakhā* of Shri Govardhananāthajī are recounted in his *vārtā*, translated in Part II of this study. In his *alaukika* identity Sūradāsa was called "Kṛṣṇasakhā" and accompanied Shri Kṛṣṇa in all of his daytime *līlās*—taking the cows out to graze, playing games in the pasture, and so on—in the *alaukika* Braj called Goloka. So it was that Sūradāsa was able to describe all of the daytime *līlās* of Shri Kṛṣṇa in his *Surasāgara* with such vivid imagery and with such *alaukika* intensity of devotion. The daytime *līlās* were, however, only half of the full experience of Shri Kṛṣṇa's *līlā*. Shri Kṛṣṇa also performed *līlās* at night together with his beloved Rādhā (who is called "Shri Svāminījī" by the members of Vallabhācārya's *Sampradāya*) and the *sakhīs* (female companions). These night-time *līlās*, which were performed in peaceful, secluded groves, were *līlās* of love in which Shri Kṛṣṇa satisfied the longings of Shri Svāminījī. No male was allowed to witness these *līlās*, or, more exactly, no male is allowed to be present during these night-time *līlās*, for they are eternal, as are all of Shri Kṛṣṇa's *līlās*, and are constantly being performed in Goloka.¹ Even Sūradāsa and the other *sakhās* were barred from witnessing the night-time *līlās*. But, Sūradāsa has described in detail in his verses the night-time *līlās* of Shri Kṛṣṇa and Shri Svāminījī. The *bhāvaprakāsha* to Sūradāsa's *vārtā* explains how he was able to be present during that *līlā* forbidden to men. Each of the eight *sakhās*—including, of course, the *sakhā* that is Sūradāsa—has a dual identity: during the day each of them keeps his male form and goes with Shri Kṛṣṇa as his

¹At the present time no one is allowed to remain inside the compound of the *nikūñja* (bower) *līlā* grounds in the town of Brindaban (Māthurā Dist., U.P.) after dark. It is said that Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa perform their *līlā* in the grounds every night and that Sūradāsa (in his Kṛṣṇasakhā form) and the other seven *sakhās* stand invisible guard—facing away from the grounds—at the gates to the compound all night.

sakhā in the day-time *līlā* and during the night each of them assumes a female form and witnesses the night-time *līlā* of Shrī Krṣṇa and Shrī Svāmīnijī as a *sakhī*. In this way Sūradāsa was able to experience the delight of participation in the divine nocturnal *līlā*. When in his *alaukika sakhi* form Sūradāsa was called “*Compakalatā*.¹ Sūradāsa, as an eternal companion and servant (a *sakhā* must, by nature, be a *sevaka*) of Shrī Krṣṇa, was privileged to take part in all of the divine *līlās* of Shrī Krṣṇa’s infancy and childhood, youth, and adulthood and was able to feel as a part of himself all kinds of *bhaktibhāva*.

With Sūradāsa’s *alaukika* experience in mind, the poem quoted on page four above takes on a considerably enhanced significance. It becomes more than just a poem in the style of *vātsalya bhakti bhāva* (that variety of *bhaktibhāva* through which the *bhakta* (devotee) tries to experience within himself the feeling and emotion, the complete state of mind [the *bhāva*] that produces the *alaukika* love with which Shrī Krṣṇa’s parents devoted themselves to their son); it becomes a direct description of Sūradāsa’s own experience of *vātsalya bhakti bhāva*. Sūradāsa, in that *alaukika* state of participation in the eternal *līlā* of Bhagavān Shrī Krṣṇa, saw and experienced simultaneously the *bhāva* of Yashodā teaching the infant Krṣṇa to walk. What exactly that *alaukika* state experienced by Sūradāsa and other *sevakas* in Vallabhācārya’s *Sampradāya* may be can evidently not be described; it can only be said that it is a condition that may be attained on earth and a condition that has, if the claims of Vallabhācārya and his followers are to be accepted, been attained on earth. It was to help human beings realize this *alaukika* state that Vallabhācārya revealed the *Puṣṭimārga*. Sūradāsa and other perfect *sevakas* initiated by Vallabhācārya into the practice of the *Puṣṭimārga* were, for those still on the *laukika* level of being, living examples of the attainment of the *alaukika* on earth.

Before continuing into the detailed description of the nature of Vallabhācārya’s religious revelation, something must be said about the basic worldview that has to be appropriated by those who would progress along the *Puṣṭimārga* from the *laukika* to the *alaukika*, from the false to the true. The recognition of the opposition of the *laukika* to the *alaukika* is fundamental to the practice of the *Puṣṭimārga*. This recognition brings about the first of the series of internal transformations that the *sevaka* on the *Puṣṭimārga* must undergo, for the *Puṣṭimārga* is meant to effect a progression of changes that will transform the *jīva* (human soul) from the condition of being *dusṭa* (defiled, polluted, corrupted, impure) to the state of being *shuddha* (clean, undefiled, pure). It is the *shuddha* state that is the real and true state of the *jīva*; therefore,

¹HARIRĀYAJĪ, *Caurāsi Vaisnavan ki Vārtā* [*Tin Janma ki Lilā Bhāvanāvālī*], ed. DvĀRAKADĀSA PARĪKHA (Mathurā: Dvārakadāsa Parīkha, 1961), pp. 377–378.

the *Puṣṭimārga* is a process to the restoration of the real, a process that is firmly within the mainstream of Indian philosophical and religious thought. By the initial realization that there is a distinction between what is *laukika* and what is *alaukika* and by the comprehension of the *laukika* state as being a state characterized by misery, selfishness, ignorance, and death and the *alaukika* state as being a state characterized by life, truth, and perpetual practice of *sevā* of Shri Kṛṣṇa, the *sevaka* is supposed to feel a desire for and an attraction to *alaukika* life. Vallabhācārya's teachings hold that the *laukika* and *alaukika* states are not physical states but are states of attitude. They do not result from bodily actions but rather from attitudinal orientation. It is for this reason that Sūradāsa, for example, could experience the *alaukika* on the same material terrain on which others could see only the *laukika*.

Building from the fundamental distinction of the *alaukika* from the *laukika*, Vallabhācārya taught that there are three different attitudes through which any element of the universe may be observed; one of these attitudes is *laukika* and the other two are *alaukika*. Among the writings of Vallabhācārya is a collection of sixteen very short books in Sanskrit combined into one larger book and called the *Sodashagrantha* (The Sixteen Books), one of the books included in the *Sodashagrantha* is the "Siddhāntamuktāvalī" and it is in the "Siddhāntamuktāvalī" that Vallabhācārya discusses the three different attitudes. Vallabhācārya uses the example of a man who goes to the bank of the sacred Gangā River. Such a man has a choice of three different ways in which to view the river. He may look at it and see simply a river, a current on its way from its headwaters in the mountain to its union with the sea; if the man should look at the Gangā as a stream of water, then he has seen the *ādhibhautika* or material form of the Gangā. If the man at the Gangā, on the other hand, should enter the Gangā as a holy place of pilgrimage which will purify him of his sins, then that man has seen the *ādhyātmika* or spiritual form of the Gangā. But if the man should go to the Gangā not simply as to a river and not to perform worship in order to get spiritual benefit, but rather to praise the Gangā as a *bhakta* of the Gangā without thought of his own benefit, then that man has realized the *ādhidaivika* form of the Gangā or the divine form of the river. Just as there are three different attitudes toward the Gangā, so, according to Vallabhācārya, are there also three possible ways of beholding the Supreme Being Bhagavān Shri Kṛṣṇa. One may see only the physical universe (the *jagat* in Vallabhācārya's philosophical terminology), which would be seeing only the *ādhibhautika* form of Shri Kṛṣṇa; or, one may realize through one's own abilities to reason and meditate and concentrate one's mental and physical powers the impersonal absolute entity that underlies the universe, which would be, in the language of Vallabhācārya's *Sampradāya*, seeing

the *ādhyātmika* manifestation of Shri Kṛṣṇa; or, finally, one may realize through the grace (*anugraha*) of Shri Kṛṣṇa the full and complete *ādhidaivika* form which contains and immeasurably exceeds the *ādhibhautika* and *ādhyātmika* forms and which is Shri Kṛṣṇa fully manifested.¹

This explanation by Vallabhācārya of the three different ways of considering the universe and one's life is still popular today in Vallabhācārya's *Sampradāya* as a simple and clear method of putting into words the worldview necessary for any approach to the *Puṣṭimārga*. It is especially popular for the instruction of children and for their preparation for the initiation that marks their entrance into the *Sampradāya* and into the care of Shri Kṛṣṇa.² The step from the *ādhibhautika* view (which is the *laukika* view) to the *ādhyātmika* (which is removed from the ordinary material view and so is *alaukika*, but is still not the vision of the complete truth) and the step from the *ādhyātmika* attitude to the *ādhidaivika* point of view (which is the perfect *alaukika* attitude) brings one to the goal of the *Puṣṭimārga*: the practice of constant, love-filled *sevā* to Shri Kṛṣṇa that is the *dharma* of every *jīva*. These three steps or attitudes are the same three steps which a follower of Vallabhācārya goes through if he should want to move seriously along the *Puṣṭimārga*. The first step is the initiation into the *Sampradāya*, a step that anyone may take; it is, so to speak, the *ādhibhautika* level of Vallabhācārya's teaching. The second step is the study of the *Shuddhādvaita*, the philosophical foundations of the teachings of Vallabhācārya and the *ādhyātmika* level of those teachings. The third and last level is that of the *Puṣṭimārga*, the perfection of the practice of *sevā*, the *ādhidaivika* level of Vallabhācārya's doctrines. In Part II of this study, in the translations of four *vārtās* from the *Caurāśi Vaiṣṇavan kī Vārtā*, these three steps will be exemplified in the lives of particular *sevakas* of Vallabhācārya.

¹SITĀRĀMA CATURVEDI, *Mahāprabhu Shrimadvallabhācārya aur Puṣṭimārga* (Vārāṇasi : Hindi-Sāhitya-Kuṭīra, 1967), pp. 282-284.

²CIMMANALĀLA HARISHĀNKARAJĪ, *Puṣṭimārgopadeshikā*, trans. into Hindi by SHRĪ-MĀDHAVA SHARMĀ (Vārāṇasi : Shrimādhava Sharinā, 1941), pp. 113-116.

The *Sampradāya*

VALLABHĀCĀRYA'S OPINION OF his own age was definitely not an optimistic one; for him it was an age sunk in the depths of the decadent *Kali Yuga*, a time when men had become bloated with pride, arrogance, and viciousness. In the "Shrikṛṣṇāshrayah", another of the brief books that make up the *Sodashagrantha*, Vallabhācārya lashes out at his age with the following jeremiad :

In this Kali Yuga, when hypocrisy predominates, all good paths have been lost and heresy is rampant, Krishna alone is my Way.

The Malechchhas (non-Hindus) have surrounded all the holy places with the result that they have become infected with evil. Besides, the holy people are full of sorrow. At such a time Krishna alone is my Way.

. . . The learned people have become mad with pride; they follow the path of sin and are bent only upon personal gain and reputation; at such a time Krishna alone is my Way.¹

In such an age the only hope for human beings is the grace (*anugraha*) of Shrī Krṣṇa; only by that grace could men have any chance to find the *alaukika* in an era overwhelmingly *laukika*. Vallabhācārya saw the task of preparing men to receive that grace as his *svadharma*, his own personal, inescapable obligation. But, in order to fulfil this obligation, Vallabhācārya first had to come to grips with a seemingly insoluble dilemma with which he was confronted. This problem arose from the fact that *jīvas* (human souls) lost in the *Kali Yuga* had become so thoroughly

¹BHAI MANILAL C. PAREKH, *Sri Vallabhacharya Life, Teachings and Movement* (Rajkot : Sri Bhagavata Dharma Mission, 1943), pp. 470-471.

The Sanskrit text and a Hindī translation may be found in: SITĀRĀMA CATARVEDĪ, *Mahā-prabhu Shrimadvallabhācārya aur Puṣṭi-Mārga* (Vārāṇasī : Hindi-Sāhitya-Kuṭīra, 1967), pp. 301-302.

contaminated by the sort of impurities (*doṣa*) enumerated in the selection from the “*Śrīkrṣṇāshrayaḥ*” above that, Vallabhācārya feared, they could never approach or be approached by Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa who is perfectly pure and by nature repels all things tinged with impurity. Nevertheless, the only possibility for the salvation (*uddhāra*, a Sanskrit word which signifies the action of lifting or pulling something out of something else or of rescuing someone or something from some danger and which is used by Vallabhācārya to mean Bhagavān’s rescue of *jīvas* from the bondage to ignorance, death, and falsity that is *samsāra*)¹ of the *Jīvas* was the grace that could be received only directly from Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa. The solution to the dilemma was presented to Vallabhācārya by Śrī Kṛṣṇa himself at Gokula² where Vallabhācārya had paused for a time in the course of a pilgrimage to the holy places of Braj. At midnight on Thursday the eleventh of the light half of the month of Shrāvaṇa (July-August) in the year A.D. 1494³ at Gokula, Śrī Kṛṣṇa appeared before Vallabhācārya and revealed to him directly the means by which the *jīvas* might be cleansed of their faults.⁴ Since it is with this event—considered by Vallabhācārya’s followers to be the most important single event in the history of their *Sampradāya*—that the *Sampradāya* of Vallabhācārya came into being, Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s full message must be quoted as Vallabhācārya himself repeats it in the “*Siddhāntarahasyam*”, another of the writings included in the *Ṣodashagrantha*. The message appears there as follows:

Now I will tell, syllable by syllable, what was said to me by Bhagavān who was present before my eyes at midnight on the eleventh of the bright half of the month of Shrāvaṇa.

¹MONIER-WILLIAMS, *A Sanskrit-English Dictionary*, p. 189.

²Gokula is located across the Yamunā from Mathurā (about seven miles to the southeast of Mathurā by road) and is a famous Vaiṣṇava holy place, attracting great numbers of pilgrims each year. It was at Gokula that Vasudeva, carrying the newborn Kṛṣṇa to the house of King Nanda of the cowherds, first set foot on dry land after crossing the flood-swollen Yamunā and it was at Gokula that Śrī Kṛṣṇa played much of his childhood *līlā* (*bālalīlā*). See the following for the tale of the birth of Śrī Kṛṣṇa:

KRISHNA-DWAIPAYANA VYASA, *The Srimad-Bhagavatam*, trans. J. M. SANYAL (Calcutta: Oriental Publishing Co., 1952), p. 17, vol. IV.

Descriptions of Gokula and its temples are found in:

L. F. R. WILLIAMS (ed.), *A Handbook for Travellers in India, Pakistan, Burma and Ceylon* (London: John Murray, 1965), pp. 206–207.

F. S. GROWSE, *Mathurā: A District Memoir* (Allāhābād: N. W. Provinces and Oudh Govt. Press, 1883), pp. 272–283.

³KĀNTHAMĀṇI SHĀSTRĪ “Vishārada”, *Kāṅkarolī kā Itihāsa* (Kāṅkarolī: Śrīvidyā-Vibhāga, 1940), II, 32.

⁴HARIRĀYĀJĪ, *Caurāśi Vaiṣṇavan kī Vārtā* [Tīn Janma kī Līlā Bhāvanāvālī], ed. DvāRAKA-DĀSA PARĪKHA (Mathurā: Dvārakadāsa Parīkha, 1961), pp. 4–5.

By means of the *Brahmasambandha* all of the impurities (*doṣa*)—including those of the *jīva* as well as those of the body—of all people will disappear; these *doṣas* fall into five categories:

Those which are innate, those which result from one's region, those which result from one's time, those that result from association, and those that result from direct contact; all five are recognized by the world and by the *Vedas* and none of them is ever to be approved.

Impurities can be removed in no way other than by the rejection of all things that have not been dedicated to Shri Kṛṣṇa.

Those who have dedicated themselves to Shri Kṛṣṇa must hand over every one of their actions to Shri Kṛṣṇa; an offering of something that has already been partly enjoyed is not a permissible offering to him who is the god of gods.

Therefore, one must dedicate everything that he has to Shri Kṛṣṇa first and only then may one make use of his possessions. There is a precept that holds that anything that has been offered to Shri Kṛṣṇa then belongs only to Shri Kṛṣṇa and cannot be taken back and used by the offerer;

But, this precept is intended only for those who follow ordinary, worldly doctrines and modes of worship and is not to be accepted by followers of this *Puṣṭimārga*. One must dedicate oneself and one's belongings to Shri Kṛṣṇa just as, in everyday life, a servant puts himself entirely at the service of his employer.

Everything that is dedicated to Shri Kṛṣṇa becomes divine in nature in just the same way that all waters, both those that were pure and those that were impure, which enter into the *Gangā* become part of the *Gangā* and so share the sacred essence of the *Gangā*;

The receiving of offerings by Shri Kṛṣṇa is just like the receiving of waters by the *Gangā*, for in both cases the result is the same. The “*Siddhāntarahasya*” by Vallabhācārya is hereby completed.¹

Dāmodaradāsa Harasānī, a close companion of Vallabhācārya, was present that night when Bhagavān Shri Kṛṣṇa appeared to Vallabhācārya and he heard the divine voice but was unable to understand what it was saying. On the morning of the next day, Vallabhācārya initiated Dāmodaradāsa with the *Brahmasambandha* mantra that had been given the night before by Shri Kṛṣṇa, thus making Dāmodaradāsa the first member of the new *Sampradāya*. In taking the *Brahmasambandha* rite of initiation Dāmodaradāsa, like all of those who have followed him into the *Sampradāya* up to the present day, became free of all impurities and acceptable

¹The English translation is mine. The Sanskrit text and a Hindi translation will be found in CATURVEDĪ, *Mahāprabhu*, pp. 292–293.

to Shri Kṛṣṇa. Those who take the rite are, according to Vallabhācārya's doctrines, put thereby into direct relationship with Shri Kṛṣṇa (*Brahma* is Brahman, the Supreme Being who is called Shri Kṛṣṇa; *sambandha* is the state of being bound or joined together, association, conjunction, union, related or connected condition, relationship)¹ and made eligible to receive the grace (*anugraha*) of Bhagavān.² The key to the efficacy of the *Brahmasambandha* mantra and rite is the self-dedication (*ātmanivedāna*) doctrine contained therein. In taking the *Brahmasambandha* one gives himself, his possessions, and his actions completely up to Shri Kṛṣṇa and he vows to dedicate all future actions and material belongings to Shri Kṛṣṇa before enjoying them. By so doing, one offers himself up to Shri Kṛṣṇa without reservation or selfishness and becomes, like everything that is offered to Shri Kṛṣṇa, divine and pure (see verse 8 of the "Siddhāntarahasya" on p. 18 above). The taking of the *Brahmasambandha* was evidently in the time of Vallabhācārya a physically simple act, uncomplicated by ritual. The standard procedure would be for the candidate for entrance into the *Sampradāya* to humbly entreat Vallabhācārya to take him into his spiritual protection; if Vallabhācārya were willing to admit the candidate, he would tell him to go bathe and then return; on the return of the candidate, Vallabhācārya would give the candidate Bhagavān's own name—Shri Kṛṣṇa—to be his mantra and then have him dedicate himself and all that belonged to him to Shri Kṛṣṇa; finally, Vallabhācārya would begin instructing the candidate—now a member of the *Sampradāya*—in the secret significance of the name of Bhagavān, in the meaning of the tenth chapter of the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*, and in other matters of doctrine.³ This process of initiation was not an unusual one in Vallabhācārya's time and it would not be considered out of the ordinary among rites of religious initiation in India today. The contribution of Vallabhācārya was not in the form of the initiation, but in the emphasis that the rite of initiation placed on the complete dedication of the candidate by his own desire to the divine and in the requirement of the rite that the initiate submit every action,

¹MONIER-WILLIAMS, *Dictionary*, pp. 740, 1177.

²Vallabhācārya differentiated between Brahman (*akṣara Brahman*) the impersonal, qualityless absolute and Parabrahman-Shri Kṛṣṇa the Supreme Being with divine, non-material body and qualities. Parabrahman dwells within, yet also contains, the *akṣara* Brahman, the latter being merely a limited manifestation of the former. For those who object that the *Brahmasambandha* brings one into contact only with the *akṣara* Brahman and not with the supreme Brahman (Parabrahman), the sectarians say that the *Brahmasambandha* rite puts one into contact with *akṣara* Brahman, the abode of Parabrahman, and that by so entering the house of Parabrahman one will meet Parabrahman. See the following:

CIMMANALĀ HARISHĀNKARAJĪ, *Puṣṭimārgopadeshikā*, trans. into Hindi by SHRĪMĀDHAVA SHARMĀ (Vārāṇasi: Shrimādava Sharmā, 1941), pp. 8-9.

³HARIRĀYAJĪ, *Caurāsi Vaiṣṇavan kī Vārtā*, p. 383.

thought, or possession to Shri Kṛṣṇa before making use of it. By this self-dedication the problem of the *jīva*'s impurities was solved and a way was opened for human beings to find the divine even in the midst of the *Kali Yuga*.

At the present time, since most members of Vallabhācārya's *Sampradāya* are born into the sect rather than converted to it in adulthood, the age of the initiates is usually young. There are, in fact, now two initiations; one is given to all children of sectarian families sometime before they reach the age of five years and the other is given later, at about the age of twelve for boys and just before marriage for girls, to the same children. The first initiation consists only of the giving of the holy eight-syllabled mantra—"Shri Kṛṣṇah sharanam mama" (Shri Kṛṣṇa is my refuge)¹—and a *tulasī* wood necklace (which is common to all Vaiṣṇava sects). The second is more elaborate and is usually preceded by a one-day fast intended to bring the candidate into accord with the significance of the ceremony. At the time of the initiation the initiator (who is always a direct descendant in the male line from Vallabhācārya) places a *tulasī* leaf in the hand of the candidate and has him repeat a formula by which he dedicates his mind, body, wealth (*mana*, *tana*, and *dhana*), wife, household, senses, and everything else to Shri Kṛṣṇa. After taking the second ceremony of initiation, the candidate is considered to have put himself in the hands of Shri Kṛṣṇa, to have been purified of his *dosas*, and to have become a full member of the *Sampradāya*.²

BIRTH AND CHILDHOOD OF VALLABHACARYA

Some information on the early events of Vallabhācārya's life will be

¹The esoteric interpretation of the eight-syllabled *Brahmasambandha* mantra as taught in the *Sampradāya* is as follows:

shrī—this syllable brings wealth and good fortune

kṛ—this syllable withers and destroys sin

ṣṇāḥ—this syllable drives away *ādhibhautika* (relating to matter), *ādhyātmika* (relating to the individual self), and *ādhidaivika* (relating to the divine) sorrows and misfortunes

sha—this syllable dispels the sorrows of birth and death

ra—this syllable gives one knowledge related to Shri Kṛṣṇa

ṇam—this syllable causes one's devotion (*bhakti*) to Shri Kṛṣṇa to be firm

ma—this syllable brings the affection of one's guru who teaches one the methods of divine *sevā*

ma—this syllable unites one with Shri Kṛṣṇa so that one need never again be born on the *laukika* plane

For further information on the above see: HARISHANKARAJI, pp. 28–30.

²Ibid., pp. 5–7. A somewhat hostile description of the same ceremonies is given in the following book: [KARSANDAS MULJI], *History of the Sect of Maharajas or Vallabhacharyas in Western India* (London: Trubner and Co., 1865), pp. 120–121.

useful at this point in our study of his *Sampradāya*. Like most of the great revealers of transcendent doctrines in India and elsewhere in the world, Vallabhācārya was not born into his life on earth in a commonplace manner. The story of his birth, as it appears in the traditions of his *Sampradāya*, is as replete with miracles and signs of special supernatural favour as the birth legend of any comparable religious leader of any time or country. These legends of extraordinary births, practically always followed—and the case of Vallabhācārya is no exception—by tales of childhoods marked by wondrous precocity in scholarship and learning and by marvellous righteousness and godliness in behaviour, are more than just attempts to exalt some particular system of religious or philosophical belief over its competitors by making its founder seem to have been more than human. These supernatural stories themselves may tell a great deal about the worldview of the sect by which they are produced and in which they are told and retold. For this reason, in the following sketch of the life of Vallabhācārya, which agrees as closely as possible with the account that seems to be most widely accepted in the Vallabhācārya *Sampradāya*, supernatural or seemingly unreasonable elements have not been ignored, shunted aside, or reasoned away, but have been presented just as they traditionally appear. That so much of Vallabhācārya's life on earth has an air of the *alaukika* about it should be no cause for wonder for Vallabhācārya, who is considered by most of the members of his *Sampradāya* to have been a divine incarnation (*avatāra*), spent his life on earth working for an *alaukika* goal.

The story of Vallabhācārya's life does not begin with his birth or with the birth of his father or grandfather, but rather with the miraculous appearance of a divine *svarūpa* (see p. 9 above) out of the top of the sacred hill of Govardhana. Govardhana Hill (also known as "Girirāja," the King among Mountains), which is located some fourteen miles to the west of Mathurā, is an important place of pilgrimage for all Vaiṣṇavas. As a symbol of the refuge from sins and afflictions that Shri Kṛṣṇa offers his devotees, Govardhana Hill has special importance for the followers of the teachings of Vallabhācārya. During the time when Shri Kṛṣṇa was playing out his *līlā* in the earthly Braj, the cowherd people with whom Shri Kṛṣṇa lived used to sacrifice to Indra, the god of rains. In order to destroy Indra's pride Kṛṣṇa persuaded the cowherd people to stop offering sacrifices to Indra and to offer them to Govardhana Hill—which was then far higher than it is in this *Kali Yuga*—instead. The people did so and Shri Kṛṣṇa, taking the form of the deity of Govardhana Hill, accepted their offerings. Indra was enraged at being deprived of his offerings and sent torrents of rain to punish the cowherds for neglecting his worship. Shri Kṛṣṇa, however, took up Govardhana Hill and held it with one arm over the cowherd families and their animals and

so protected them until Indra was forced to admit defeat.¹ In the early morning one day in A.D. 1410 a black stone in the form of a bent arm stretched upward appeared out of the ground on top of this sacred hill. A local herdsman discovered the new image and told his friends about it. Since the new image had been discovered on *Nāga-pañcamī*, the day on which snakes are worshipped in India, it was decided to hold a religious fair annually on that day in honour of the image. The image came to be worshipped with offerings of milk, just as snakes are worshipped. Because of its colour, shape, and the day on which it was discovered, it was probably originally thought of as a serpent deity. The fame of the image spread until it was known throughout Braj. Then, several decades later, at midnight on the eleventh of the dark half of the month of Vaishākha (April-May) of A.D. 1479, the image suddenly rose further out of the ground and a face was revealed along with the uplifted arm. This new appearance attracted still more attention to the image and people began coming in large numbers to see it and to worship it. It was now called "Devadamana", an epithet of Shri Kṛṣṇa that means "Subduer of Gods",² but it was still worshipped with offerings of milk. At the very moment that the face of the image called Devadamana—which was really not an ordinary image but a *svarūpa* of Shri Kṛṣṇa, the true name of which was "Shri Govardhananāthaji", the Lord of Govardhana—appeared above ground, Vallabhācārya was born far away from Braj in a forest in the modern Indian state of Madhya Pradesh. The tradition of the simultaneous occurrence of the appearance of the face—especially of the mouth—of the *svarūpa* of Shri Kṛṣṇa on Govardhana Hill and of the birth of Vallabhācārya has a special significance for the members of the *Sampradāya*. The mouth of Bhagavān Shri Kṛṣṇa is the source of speech, of the eternal cosmic sound and the mouth of Bhagavān Shri Kṛṣṇa is also the receptacle of divine (*ādhidaivika*) fire (*agni*). Vallabhācārya is called in the *Sampradāya* the *Mukhāvatāra* of Bhagavān (the incarnation of the mouth of Bhagavān Shri Kṛṣṇa). As such, Vallabhācārya has both the divine speech for instructing his followers in the understanding of perfect truth and the divine fire with which he can burn away the sins and impurities (*doṣa*) of his followers so that they may become pure and take refuge with Shri Kṛṣṇa.³

Vallabhācārya was born into a family of Telugu Brāhmaṇas belonging

¹IVYASA, Vol. IV, pp. 104–111.

²The *svarūpa* was considered to have three sections, each with a different name; the left section (including the upraised arm) is called Nāgadamana "Subduer of the Serpent", the right section is called Indradamana, and the middle section is called Devadamana—Indradamana means "Subduer of Indra" and Devadamana means "Subduer of Gods". See HARIRĀYĀJĪ, pp. 336–337.

³HARISHANKARAJĪ, pp. 23–24.

to the Bhāradvāja gotra, adhering to the Taittiriya branch of the Yajurveda, and included within the Velanāṭa or Vellanāḍu group of Brāhmaṇas. Vallabhācārya's family's ancestral village was the village of Kānkarakaravāḍa on the south bank of the Godāvarī River in modern Āndhra Pradesh. His family had been Vaiṣṇava and devoted to Shrī Kṛṣṇa for generations; the family goddess was called "Renukā". The birth of an *avatāra* of Bhagavān Shrī Kṛṣṇa within Vallabhācārya's family had long been awaited; it was said that an early member of the family had been given a divine promise that such an *avatāra* would be born in the family after family members had performed over the generations one hundred *soma* sacrifices. Vallabhācārya's father, Lakṣmaṇa Bhaṭṭa, though he was married to a girl named Illammā (her name is usually given with the Telugu honorific suffix "-gārū")—who was the daughter of a family priest serving the rulers of the empire of Vijayanagara (Vidyānagara), had a very strong inclination to take vows of *sannyāsa* (abandonment of worldly life). At one point before the birth of Vallabhācārya, Lakṣmaṇa left his parents and wife and three children to follow a famous holy man, but the holy man told Lakṣmaṇa that a son destined to bring teachings of joy to the world would soon be born to him and sent him back to his family. Lakṣmaṇa eventually performed five *soma* sacrifices, which brought the family total to one hundred; not long after Bhagavān Shrī Kṛṣṇa appeared to Lakṣmaṇa in a dream and announced to him his intention of taking human form as his son. Out of piety, Lakṣmaṇa and his wife next decided to undertake a pilgrimage to the sacred places of North India and set out from the Telugu country in the company of a group of pilgrims belonging to their own caste (*jāti*). By A.D. 1477 they had reached the holy conflux of the three rivers at Prayāga (Allāhābād); there Lakṣmaṇa decided to continue on to Vārāṇasī and settle in that most sacred of all the cities of India for the remainder of his life. Lakṣmaṇa and Illammāgārū did settle in Vārāṇasī, but they were not to live there long in peace. At this time the political situation in the Vārāṇasī region was most disturbed; Buhlūl Lodi of Delhi was locked in his struggle with Husain Shāh the ruler of the Sharqī kingdom of Jaunpur (with its capital only 36 miles to the northwest of Vārāṇasī),¹ both kings were Muslim. In late 1478 rumours of an impending Muslim raid against the wealthy Hindu temples of Vārāṇasī—a raid that was supposed to be led by the formidable Buhlūl Lodī himself or by one of his lieutenants—caused Lakṣmaṇa Bhaṭṭa and his wife, who was seven months pregnant, to join a party of South Indians fleeing from Vārāṇasī to return to their homes in the south. The rigours of the journey were especially hard on

¹R. C. MAJUMDAR (ed.), *The Delhi Sultanate*, vol. VI of *The History and Culture of the Indian People* (11 vols.; Bombay: Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, 1967), pp. 140–141, 191–192.

Illammāgārū and finally, deep in the wild and unpopulated Campāranya (a forest in modern Raipur District, Madhya Pradesh),¹ she was no longer able to keep up with the rest of the refugees and she and her husband stopped to spend the night in the forest alone. At midnight that same night Illammāgārū, in the eighth month of her pregnancy, bore a son. It was dark, Illammāgārū was exhausted, and the child was premature; therefore, when the child did not move and showed no signs of life, Illammāgārū sorrowfully concluded that he had been born dead. She called her husband who, after a brief examination, agreed that the infant was dead. In the darkness neither of the parents noticed the auspicious birthmarks on the child's body. Grief-stricken, the parents wrapped the body of their dead child in leaves and left it at the foot of the huge *shamī* tree under which Illammāgārū had borne the child. Then, that very night, Lakṣmaṇa and Illammāgārū went on toward the town of Caudānagara, which they reached before morning.

The thread of the story must be broken here in order to consider briefly the significance of Vallabhācārya's birth beneath a *shamī* tree. The association of trees with human beings, and especially with extraordinary human beings, is, to be sure, not uncommon in India and in the world as a whole. One immediately thinks of the birth of Gautama the Buddha beneath a *shāla* tree in the Lumbini Grove, though the Buddha's birth was free of the pain and suffering which attended the birth of Vallabhācārya. The elaborate myths, rites, and legends that have in many societies grown up around trees—the Cosmic Tree, the Tree of Life, etc.—no doubt explain part of the meaning behind the birth of Vallabhācārya under a tree,³ but there also seems to be some significance in the fact that it was a *shamī* tree under which Vallabhācārya was born. The *shamī* is a real tree, possibly a kind of mimosa, and has had importance in India for ritual uses. The hard wood of the *shamī* tree is supposed to contain fire and was used to kindle the sacred fire; according to an ancient Indian legend primeval fire was produced when Purūrvas rubbed together the branches of two different trees, one of

¹Campāranya is located by the village of Champajhar in Raipur tahsil, M.P. The identification of this place with the forest where Vallabhācārya was born was made in the last quarter of the nineteenth century and, since then, a shrine has been built to mark the spot where Vallabhācārya's birth took place. The place now attracts many pilgrims, most of them members of the Vallabhācārya *Sampradāya*, every year, most from western India. Even today, no pregnant woman will enter the forest here for fear of suffering an abortion. See A. E. NELSON (ed.), *Central Provinces District Gazetteer, Rajpur District, Vol. "A"* (Bombay: Govt. of India Press, 1909), pp. 279–280.

²HENRY CLARKE WARREN, *Buddhism in Translations* (New York : Atheneum, 1969), pp. 45–46.

³MIRCEA ELIADE, *Patterns in Comparative Religion* (Cleveland : World Publishing Co., 1968), pp. 265–330.

which was the *shamī*.¹ Considering Vallabhācārya's association with divine fire as a result of being the *Mukhāvatāra* of Bhagavān (see p. 22 above), it is fitting and significant that he was born under a tree so closely connected with fire as the *shamī* tree.

Lakṣmaṇa and Illammāgārū arrived in Caudānagara very tired and lay down to sleep as soon as they found a place to stay. During his sleep Lakṣmaṇa had a dream in which Bhagavān Shri Kṛṣṇa appeared to him and told him that the infant that had been left under the *shamī* tree was still alive. Upon awakening, both Lakṣmaṇa and Illummāgārū went directly back to the spot where they had left their son. When they reached the spot, they found the infant alive and playing happily and unharmed in the midst of a blazing fire which had protected him through the night. The protecting fire carries on the same theme of the divine, purifying fire that was associated with Vallabhācārya and used by him to burn away the faults of his followers. Perhaps the legend of the revival of the stillborn infant Vallabhācārya within the divine purifying, protecting fire is the *Sampradāya*'s way of removing its founder from the *laukika* existence and placing him in the *alaukika* from the moment of his birth. Since Vallabhācārya was born dead, he was able to acquire a human—*laukika*—form without ever having had *laukika* life; then, he received *alaukika* life from the *alaukika* fire. As has already been mentioned in connection with the account of the appearance of the face of the *svarūpa* of Shri Kṛṣṇa on Govardhana Hill (see p. 22 above), Vallabhācārya was born on Sunday, the eleventh of the dark half of the month of Vaishākha (April-May), at midnight, in A.D. 1479 (like most dates in Vallabhācārya's life, doubt has been cast on the date of his birth with some putting it in A.D. 1473).² Husain Shāh of Jaunpur had been completely defeated by Buhlūl Lodī about a month before Vallabhācārya's birth, so conditions in the Vārāṇasī area were probably becoming more peaceful. At any rate, Lakṣmaṇa Bhaṭṭa decided to return to Vārāṇasī instead of continuing on to the Telugu country. Vallabhācārya thus spent his childhood in the city of Vārāṇasī. It was, of course, a marvellous childhood. Vallabhācārya was invested with the sacred thread in A.D. 1487 at the age of eight, the normal age at which Brāhmaṇa boys receive the thread and enter into study of the scriptures. From this point on, however, there was nothing normal about Vallabhācārya's childhood. Lakṣmaṇa Bhaṭṭa was anxious to provide Vallabhācārya with the best possible orthodox Brahmanical education and he provided him with the best teachers that he could find, but, even so, he must have been astounded at the progress that his son made. By the age of eleven Vallabhā-

¹MONIER-WILLIAMS, p. 1054.

²SHĀSTRĪ, pp. 19–20.

cārya had mastered, according to the traditions of the *Sampradāya*, the *Vedas*, the *Vedānta*, the six *shāstras*, and the necessary *purāṇas*; among all of these scriptures the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*, as would be expected, was already Vallabhācārya's favourite. As a result of his feat of accomplishing in three childhood years what even the greatest scholars can seldom achieve in a lifetime, the young Vallabha naturally became a celebrity in Vārāṇasī, one of the greatest centres of learning and philosophical discussion in India.

VALLABHACARYA'S FIRST PILGRIMAGE AND THE ESTABLISHMENT OF SHRI GOVARDHANANATHAJI

Meanwhile, convinced that he was coming to the end of his life, Lakṣmaṇa Bhaṭṭa decided to undertake one more pilgrimage, this time to the holy shrines of South India. Taking his wife and his son Vallabha with him, he set out. The first stop on the pilgrimage was the famous Vaiṣṇava shrine of Jagannātha at Purī in Orissa and it was there that Vallabhācārya scored his first major triumph over the philosophers adhering to the doctrines of *advaita* (non-dualism, a philosophical point of view that gained wide geographical currency and great philosophical prestige and influence through the labours of the famous philosopher Śaṅkarācārya of the ninth century; *advaita* is usually called *Māyāvāda*—*Māyā*-ism—in the literature of the Vallabhācārya *Sampradāya* because Vallabhācārya held that the *advaita* school accepted *Māyā*—the force of illusion—as being independent of Parabrahman, the Supreme Being); throughout his career, the followers of the doctrines of *advaita* seem to have been Vallabhācārya's chief philosophical opponents. Vallabhācārya arrived at the shrine of Jagannātha with his mother and father in A.D. 1489, which was the tenth year of his life.

The sectarian accounts relate the following events as having taken place during Vallabhācārya's visit to Purī in 1489. At that time, the local ruler was sponsoring a great *shāstrārtha* (a formal philosophical debate) on points of Vedic philosophy; the *shāstrārtha* was being held in the temple of Jagannātha. Though only a child, Vallabhācārya entered into the debate and, after a brilliant showing, was declared the victor. Then, the king put these four questions to the assembled scholars: What is the foremost scripture? Who is the foremost deity? Which is the most effective *mantra*? What is the easiest and best action? The Vaiṣṇava and *Māyāvādī* scholars argued long over the answers to these questions; Vallabhācārya answered them according to the principles and teaching of the *bhaktimārga*, but the *Māyāvādīs* said that they would

not accept his answers unless Jagannātha himself would signify his approval of them. Consequently, the king ruled that clean paper, ink, and a pen should be left within the temple of Jagannātha and that everyone should then leave the temple and that the temple gates then be locked and guarded. When the doors were opened, a Sanskrit *shloka* was found to have been written on the paper left before the image of Jagannātha. The *shloka* said that the foremost scripture is the *Bhagavad Gītā*, the foremost deity is Shrī Kṛṣṇa the son of Devakī, the foremost *mantra* is any one of Shrī Kṛṣṇa's names, and the foremost action is the service (*sevā*) of Shrī Kṛṣṇa. These answers were the answers given by Vallabhācārya. The *Māyāvādī* philosophers had not expected Jagannātha actually to give an answer, but when the answer was given they complained because the image of Jagannātha is without arms and so would have been unable to write. But, after Jagannātha wrote another *shloka*, this time condemning the *Māyāvādīs* for their behaviour, the king became very angry with them and evicted them. Vallabhācārya was given great honour and presents.

Vallabhācārya and his mother and father then proceeded on their pilgrimage toward the south. In 1490, at the Vaiṣṇava temple of Shrī Veṅkaṭeshvara (at Tirupati 80 miles northwest of Madras), Lakṣmaṇa Bhaṭṭa died and Vallabhācārya was left without a father at the age of eleven. Vallabhācārya accompanied his mother to Vijayanagara where she settled in the house of her brother. Vallabhācārya then was free to set out on the first of the three pilgrimages that were to take him to all parts of India. In the course of these three pilgrimages Vallabhācārya perfected his philosophical system, which he called "Shuddhādvaita" (pure non-dualism) and which will be discussed in detail as the *ādhyātmika* stage of Vallabhācārya's teaching in the next chapter, defended the Vaiṣṇava *bhaktimārga* against the *Māyāvādīs* and the followers of other systems of belief, gave public readings from the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* and taught his own interpretations of passages in that scripture, discussed philosophical and religious matters with scholars and holy men, and began to attract students and followers. Those who follow Vallabhācārya's teachings have placed great emphasis on Vallabhācārya's travels and have established monument-shrines called "baithakas" at each place where some important event in his life occurred. For example, there is a *baithaka* at Vallabhācārya's birthplace, another at Jagannātha-Purī where, as we have seen, he vanquished the *Māyāvādīs* and Jagannātha himself wrote a *shloka* in support of his doctrines, another at Gokula on Govindaghāṭa where he received the divine command to administer the *Brahmasambandha*, another at Jūnāgadha (Gujārāt) where a divine *svarūpa* was revealed to him on Girināra Mountain, another at Haridvāra

(Uttar Pradesh) where he bathed at the time of the Kumbha Melā, and so on. There are a total of eighty-four of these *baitīhakas*.¹ Altogether, Vallabhācārya spent nineteen years (A.D. 1493–1512) making his three tours around India. In the course of these pilgrimage tours four important events took place.

The first of these events is also the most important for the *Sampradāya*. This event is the giving of the *Brahmasambandha* to Vallabhācārya (see pp. 18–20 above) in 1494. Vallabhācārya had not, however, come to Braj with the intention of receiving the *Brahmasambandha*; he had come there for a different, but closely related, purpose. While travelling in South India in the latter part of the year 1493, Śrī Kṛṣṇa had appeared in a dream to Vallabhācārya and had instructed him to go at once to Braj and reveal the identity of a divine *svarūpa* that had appeared out of the top of Govardhana Hill. It was for the purpose of establishing the *svarūpa* under its true name, Śrī Govardhananāthaji, that Vallabhācārya had come to Braj. Vallabhācārya went to Govardhana Hill and had *darshana* (the act of coming to see and to pay homage to a deity or highly respected human being) of the image called Devadamana. Vallabhācārya realized that Devadamana was the *svarūpa* that he was to reveal to the world; he announced to the worshippers at the shrine that the image was really a *svarūpa* of Śrī Kṛṣṇa in the act of holding the mountain Govardhana over the heads of the cowherds and their families and animals and that the *svarūpa* should be called Śrī Govardhananāthaji. A rough shelter was erected over the *svarūpa* at the insistence of Vallabhācārya. Before he left Govardhana Hill Vallabhācārya appointed a man to care for the *svarūpa* and to perform a simple *sevā* for it. So it was that in 1494 Vallabhācārya established his *Sampradāya* by means of the *Brahmasambandha* initiation and received the divine *svarūpa* around which the new *Sampradāya* would revolve. Six years after the revelation of the *svarūpa* a wealthy merchant from Ambālā (in modern Haryāna state) had a dream in which Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa told him that he must build a permanent temple for Śrī Govardhananāthaji. That same year the merchant, whose name was Pūrṇamalla Khatrī, with Vallabhācārya's permission, hired an architect and set about having the temple built. When the temple was only half-finished, Pūrṇamalla ran out of money and the work on the temple stopped until he could amass enough wealth to buy materials and to pay workers for the finishing of the building. The story of Pūrṇamalla Khatrī and the building of the temple of Śrī Govardhananāthaji can be found in the *Caurāśī Vaiṣṇavan kī Vārtā*.² In A.D. 1520, twenty years after work on it was begun, the temple

¹Ibid., pp. 65–75.

²HARIRĀYAJĪ, pp. 141–144.

on Govardhana Hill was finished. It was evidently a large, solidly-built structure and it served its purpose well until it was abandoned and allowed to fall into ruins when, during the reign of Aurangzeb, the image of Shrī Govardhananāthajī was removed to Nāthadvāra in modern Rājasthān.

VALLABHACARYA'S MARRIAGE AND THE EFFECT OF HIS MARRIAGE ON HIS SAMPRADAYA

The second important event occurred, probably between A.D. 1501 and 1503 (the date, as is the case with most dates in Vallabhācārya's life, is the subject of dispute among scholars both inside and outside of the *Sampradāya*), while Vallabhācārya, in the course of his second journey around India, was at Pañḍharapura in Mahārāshtra. Vallabhācārya had gone to that city in order to have *darshana* of the famed Vaiṣṇava image of Shrī Viṭṭalanāthajī which was located there.¹ At the time of his visit to Pañḍharapura Vallabhācārya had not yet married and may well have intended to remain a *Brahmacārī* (one who leads a simple, celibate life devoted to the study of the scriptures) all of his life. But, while having *darshana* of Shrī Viṭṭalanāthajī in the temple, Vallabhācārya received a command to marry from the god himself. According to some sectarian authorities Shrī Viṭṭhalanāthajī told Vallabhācārya to marry because he himself wanted to take incarnation as Vallabhācārya's own son,² but according to other sectarian scholars Shrī Viṭṭhalanāthajī merely told Vallabhācārya that he must marry in order to produce a line of descendants to preserve and promulgate his version of the *bhaktimārga* after his death.³ At first, this event would seem to be a minor one, no more than an explanation of Vallabhācārya's decision to marry or, perhaps a legend produced in order to bestow a divine or semi-divine status on Vallabhācārya's children and their descendants. But on further examination, the story of Shrī Viṭṭhalanāthajī's order to Vallabhācārya to get a wife and have children, whatever its origin may have been, comes to have a very deep significance in the development of Vallabhācārya's *Sampradāya*. There are three aspects to the significance of this story.

First of all, it should be by now clear that Vallabhācārya was not, in the minds of his followers, an ordinary human being; he was, for

¹For a description of the shrine of Shrī Viṭṭalanāthajī at Pañḍharapura and a summary of the legends associated with it, see: M. S. MATE, *Temples and Legends of Maharashtra* (Bombay: Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, 1962), pp. 188–219.

²HARIŞANKARAJĪ, p. 31.

³SHĀSTRĪ, p. 51.

them, the *avatāra* of the holy mouth of Bhagavān, wherein resides the *ādhidaivika* (divine) fire. By his transmission of the *Brahmasambandha* to the *jīvas*, Vallabhācārya himself becomes the *ādhidaivika* fire cleansing the *jīvas* and making them pure. It is for this reason that Vallabhācārya is sometimes called the *avatāra* of Vaishvānara (Vaishvānara, which means “the one who relates to or belongs to all men”), is one of the names of the Vedic fire-god Agni)¹ in the literature of the *Sampradāya*.² If the sectarian commentators are correct, Vallabhācārya even referred to himself as Agni; see, for example, verse fourteen of Vallabhācārya’s “Jalabhedah” (included in the *Sodashagrantha*).³ Neither Vallabhācārya nor his followers can have been unaware of the function of *ādhidaivika* fire (the god Agni) in the sacred Vedas and in the sacrifices of Vedic religion. A. B. Keith has summarized the place of Agni in Vedic religion in the following words :

[Agni] is an essential element in the transmission of the sacrifice to the gods who cannot enjoy it without him. On the one hand he brings the gods down to the sacrifice and seats them on the straw that they may enjoy the food and drink offered. On the other hand he bears the oblation to the gods in heaven. In either case he is constantly serving as an envoy between the gods and men, and is especially often called the messenger of man,...The Yajurveda elevates him into a messenger of the gods....A *Brāhmaṇa* [scripture] deals with him, not as a messenger of, but as the path leading to the gods.⁴

The significance of the linking of Vallabhācārya with Agni and with the divine mouth which produces Agni hinges on Vallabhācārya’s position in his *Sampradāya* as the intermediary between Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa and the individual human *jīvas*, as the agent whereby each *jīva*’s self-sacrifice (*ātmanivedana*) reaches Bhagavān and becomes *Brahmasambandhī* and as the agent through which Bhagavān enjoys union with the self-sacrificed *jīvas*. Like Agni Vallabhācārya is both the messenger that goes between Bhagavān and the *jīvas* and the path, in his role of expounder of the *Puṣṭimārga*, that leads the *jīvas* to Bhagavān; Vallabhācārya, the *avatāra* of the divine mouth which contains the divine fire and the *avatāra* of that fire itself, is the way from the human to the divine, from the *laukika* to the *alaukika*, from the *ādhibhautika* to the *ādhidaivika*. Furthermore, Vallabhācārya’s role is just as vital to Bhagavān as it is

¹MONIER-WILLIAMS, p. 1027.

²HARISHANKARAJĪ, p. 24.

³CATARVEDĪ, pp. 309–310.

⁴ARTHUR B. KEITH, *The Religion and Philosophy of the Veda and Upanishads* (2 vols.; Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1925), vol. I, p. 159.

to the *jīvas*: Bhagavān desires the *jīvas* to realize the bliss of union with him; but, for this to occur, the *jīvas* must have contact with the purifying *adhidaivika* fire that is Vallabhācārya.

When Vallabhācārya is thought of as the connection between Shrī Kṛṣṇa and the *jīvas*, then the magnitude of the influence of any action of his, public or private, becomes readily apparent. Vallabhācārya's example was the final authority for his followers; since his life was the point of contact between the *laukika* and the *alaukika*, one could pass from the lower state to the higher by serving Vallabhācārya and by living as nearly as possible as he lived. It was so that the example of Vallabhācārya and of his *sevakas*—and especially of Sūradāsa and the other seven great poets (the *aṣṭachāpa*) of the *Sampradāya* who were themselves really the divine *aṣṭasakhā-aṣṭasakhī*—might be followed even after the earthly *līlā* of those individuals had been completed that the Vallabhācārya *Sampradāya* has so carefully preserved the accounts of the actions of Vallabhācārya and his *sevakas* in the *Caurāśī Vaiṣṇavan kī Vārtā* and the other Braj Bhāṣā *vārtā* collections. Since even the tiniest matter done by Vallabhācārya was heavy with meaning and rich with value for his followers, the effect of his marriage would be tremendous.

In India it has long been expected that persons who are seriously attempting to pass from the ignorance and error of the world to the truth and knowledge of the divine will sever all association with the ordinary way of life and its pleasures and pains. The sexual relationship, even within marriage, is always one of the first casualties when the decision to obliterate all links with the worldly life is taken. From the time of Gautama the Buddha and Mahāvīra the Jina—and perhaps from centuries before them—to Mahātmā Gāndhī¹ and present-day India, such serious seekers of transcendental wisdom and ultimate truth have generally either avoided marriage or else have renounced all marital relations. Celibacy has been considered in India such an important prerequisite to the search for truth that, of the four orthodox Hindu *āshramas* or stages of life, two (*Brahmacarya* and *sannyāsa*) require celibacy, one (*vānaprasthāshrama*) presumes it, and only one (*grasthāshrama*), the *āshrama* least concerned with spiritual knowledge, requires marriage and sexual relations. The glorification of celibacy in seekers of Truth is found among the followers of the *bhaktimārga* as often as it is found among the followers of other *mārgas*—roads—to the divine. For example, Kṛṣṇa Caitanya (A.D. 1485–1533), a Bengālī Vaiṣṇava *bhakta* around whom formed a sect of devotees of Shrī Kṛṣṇa that was flourishing in Braj (at Bṛndābana) at the same time as Vallabhācārya was establishing

¹MOHANDAS K. GANDHI, *An Autobiography, The Story of My Experiments with Truth* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1966), pp. 204–211.

the *sevā* of Shrī Govardhanānāthajī at Govardhana Hill, gave up family life and took vows of *sannyāsa* (abandonment of the worldly life).¹ The leaders (called “Gosvāmīs”) of Caitanya’s *sampradāya* at Bṛndāban follow Caitanya’s example and take vows of celibacy.² Vallabhācārya was certainly not adverse to celibacy and, as has been mentioned above, was supposed to have intended to remain celibate all his life until he received the divine order to marry, which he could not refuse, at Pandharpura. By marrying, Vallabhācārya, as the intermediary between the members of his *Sampradāya* and Shrī Kṛṣṇa, was not just demonstrating that marriage would not hinder a *sevaka*’s progress toward the divine, he was setting an example that should be followed. Consequently, today there are no organized groups of *sannyāśis* within the Vallabhācārya *Sampradāya* and *gurus* and laymen alike marry.³ It is said that Vallabhācārya took the vow of *sannyāsa* about a month before his death; after leaving his home he is supposed to have gone to Hanumāna Ghāṭa in Vārāṇasī and to have spent his last month practising yogic exercises there on the bank of the Gangā. This *sannyāsa*, however, was probably just a formality so that, in accordance with orthodox tradition, Vallabhācārya could finish his life in the fourth and last *āshrama*. He also probably wanted to die beside the Gangā in Vārāṇasī. As far as the practice of celibacy and *sannyāsa* in general are concerned, Vallabhācārya seems to have considered them dangerous sources of pride, and pride for Vallabhācārya, as for most Indian *bhaktas*, was the worst of sins since it turns one’s attention upon oneself and away from the Supreme Being. On the other hand, if a *bhakta* should become so absorbed in pure love of, and devotion to Shrī Kṛṣṇa that he could no longer function in the normal world—in other words, if a *bhakta* should have passed completely over into the *alaukika* condition, then Vallabhācārya seems to have accepted the absolute abandonment of the world as the logical course for that *bhakta* to follow. Such a *bhakta* would have had his interest in *laukika* matters so thoroughly replaced by enraptured attachment to Bhagavān Shrī Kṛṣṇa that abandonment of the world would naturally and inevitably result. Since the state of total supplantation of the *laukika* by the *alaukika*, of self-centred life by Kṛṣṇa-centred life, is the goal of the *Puṣṭimārga* taught within Vallabhācārya’s *Sampradāya*, Vallabhācārya evidently accepted some sort of world-rejection as the final stage and end result of the practice of his teachings. But, he did not teach world-renunciation

¹PRABHU DAYĀLA MĪTALA, *Caitanya Mata aur Braj Sāhitya* (Mathurā : Sāhitya Sanskritāna, 1962), pp. 3–13.

²SURENDRANATH DASGUPTA, *A History of Indian Philosophy* (5 vols.; Cambridge : Cambridge University Press, 1961), vol. IV, pp. 394–395.

³R. G. BHANDARKAR, *Vaiṣṇavism, Shaivism, and Minor Religious Systems* (Varanasi : Indological Book House, 1965), p. 82.

as part of the way or means (*mārga*) to that final state. Membership in Vallabhācārya's *Sampradāya* and practice of his *Puṣṭimārga* was emphatically not an ascetic undertaking. Ascetic regimens are self-centred, they rely on self-effort and they are usually followed for self-advantage. Anything self-centred, anything encouraging self-aggrandizement is for Vallabhācārya to be strictly avoided as a source of pride. One must, according to him, be Kṛṣṇa-centred and one must relinquish all concern for, and authority over, one's self and one's possessions to Śrī Kṛṣṇa if one expects to become free of *laukika* ignorance. Isolation from other people (one must, however, isolate himself from wicked people in order to follow the *Puṣṭimārga*) is not to be practised by Vallabhācārya's followers for such isolation, as surely as asceticism, leads only to self-delusive, self-destructive pride. Only by constant *sevā* (service) of Śrī Kṛṣṇa—singing his praises (*kirtanasevā*), having *darshana* of his *svarūpas*, listening to the accounts of his *līlā*, and so on—in the company of other *sevakas* is one, Vallabhācārya says, sure to overcome the self-pride that stands between oneself and Bhagavān. Vallabhācārya has dealt at length with the subject of renunciation, the pride and arrogance that usually result from renunciation, and the place of renunciation in the *bhaktimārga* in two of the books included in the *Sodoshagrantha*. In another chapter these two books and their teachings on renunciation will be discussed in detail. For the present instance brief quotations from each will provide sufficient illustration. The first of these two books is the "Bhaktivardhinī", the following verses are from the "Bhaktivardhinī":

When a *bhakta* reaches that state in which he realizes that the people living in his house only hinder him and are no longer his relatives, then that *bhakta* has become sealed to Śrī Kṛṣṇa and has arrived at his goal. verse 5

Since there may be obstacles to devotion to Śrī Kṛṣṇa as a result of living in solitude, one should not live by himself; there is no doubt that Śrī Kṛṣṇa will protect his *bhaktas* in every way. verse 10¹

The following verses are from the second of the two books, the "Sannyāsanirṇayah".

It is not necessary to take vows of *sannyāsa* (world-renunciation) in order to practise the nine-fold *bhakti*, for in the practice of that *bhakti* the help of other *bhaktas* is essential; both the pride common to the state of *sannyāsa* and the duties of the state of *sannyāsa* are contrary to the *bhaktimārga*. verse 3

¹CATURVEDĪ, pp. 305–307. The translation is mine.

The *sannyāsa* taken for the purpose of experiencing *viraha* (pair of separation from Shri Kṛṣṇa) is best; in the *bhaktimārga*'s *sannyāsa* one renounces only to escape the delusions that result from association with one's family members and for no other reason. verse 71

The verses are self-explanatory. Verse 5 of the "Bhaktivardhinī" teaches renunciation of ordinary life only as the almost automatic response to the attainment of the highest degree of devotion (the degree which is called *vyasana* and will be discussed in a forthcoming chapter of this study). Verse 10 of the same treatise and verse 3 of the "Sannyāsanirṇayah" both emphasize the need for the mutual aid given by the *satsang* (the conclave of righteous men) in the *bhaktimārga* and both warn against the overweening pride generated by *sannyāsa*. Verse 7 of the "Sannyāsanirṇayah" explains that the kind of *sannyāsa* that is to be practised in the *bhaktimārga* is that disinterest in wordly affairs that the *bhakta* feels when all of his attention is riveted on his desire for Kṛṣṇa and his sorrow in Kṛṣṇa's absence. Verse 7 goes on to say that the only reason one may abandon his family in the manner of a *sannyāsī* is to avoid a household environment that is bad for the development of *bhakti*.

Before proceeding on to a look at the other two major effects of Vallabhācārya's divinely ordained marriage for his *Sampradāya*, we should take a brief survey of the attitudes toward marriage held by the *aṣṭasakhā* (the eight Braj Bhāṣā poets who performed the *kīrtana sevā* before the *svarūpa* of Shri Govardhananāthajī and who were divine *sakhās-sakhīs* of Shri Kṛṣṇa manifested on earth during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries in order to take part in the *līlā* of Vallabhācārya done for the *uddhāra* (deliverance) of divine *jīvas* caught in the *Kali Yuga*), who were among the most influential of the early followers of Vallabhācārya and his two sons. The *aṣṭasakhā* (called the *aṣṭachāpa* when reference is to their status as poets rather than as *sevakas* of Shri Govardhananāthaji) are divided into two groups: one group is made up of four older poets who were initiated into the *Sampradāya* by Vallabhācārya himself and the other group is made up of four younger poets who were initiated, after Vallabhācārya's death, into the *Sampradāya* by the founder's second son Viṭṭhalanātha. The first group is made up of Sūradāsa, Kṛṣṇadāsa, Paramānandadāsa, and Kumbhanadāsa and the second group is made up of Nandadāsa, Govindasvāmī, Chītasvāmī, and Caturbhujadāsa. Of the two groups, Sūradāsa is the chief in poetic skill, but all are acclaimed as masters of the expression of *bhaktibhāva* and all are held to have had direct experience of the *līlās* of Shri Kṛṣṇa. Translations of the *vārīas* of the four older members of

¹Ibid., pp. 313-314. The translation is mine.

the *aṣṭasakhā*, all of which are found in the *Caurāśī Vaiṣṇavan kī Vārtā*, are given as Part II of this study. The *vārtās* of the four younger members are found in another collection of *vārtās*, the *Dosau Bāvan Vaiṣṇavan kī Vārtā*, which is also in Braj Bhāṣā prose and is also an important part of the sacred literature of the Vallabhācārya *Sampradāya*; these *vārtās* have not been translated in this study. Both Sūradāsa, who was blind, and Paramānandadāsa lived as *vairāgīs* (persons who have given up worldly concerns and are no longer attached to ordinary life) but, in line with Vallabhācārya's teachings, they did not forgo the society of their fellow *bhaktas*. Kṛṣṇadāsa never seems to have married, though neither did he live like a *vairāgī*; his personality, as it appears in his *vārtā*, does not show any inclination toward renunciation of the world.¹ Except for the fact that he was unmarried, Kṛṣṇadāsa's way of life was like that of a man in the householder stage. Nandadāsa was married for a time after he entered the *Sampradāya*, but he eventually left his home and became a *vairāgī* to devote all of his energies to the performance of *kīrtanasevā* before Shrī Govardhananāthaji at Govardhana Hill.² Govindasvāmī³ was also married, but he left the householder's life as soon as he was initiated into the *Sampradāya*. Chītasvāmī⁴ was also married before he entered the *Sampradāya*; he became a *vairāgī* some time after his initiation. Kumbhanadāsa was a small farmer with a large family; he never left his home, but both framed and composed and sang *kīrtanas* for Shrī Govardhananāthaji. Caturbhujadāsa,⁵ Kumbhanadāsa's son, also was a householder all of his life.⁶ It is important to note that, even among such exalted *sevakas* as the *aṣṭasakhā*—all of whom had been transferred to the *alaukika* plane of existence and so would have amply qualified for *vairāgya* under verse 5 of the “*Bhaktivardhini*” (quoted on p. 33 above) only two individuals were lifelong *vairāgīs*, only one left the householder's life upon his initiation into the *Sampradāya*, two remained married for a time after entering the *Sampradāya*, one was evidently unmarried for some mundane reason, and two remained householders all of their lives and were in no way considered inferior to the other members of the *aṣṭasakhā* group. There clearly was no provision for an order of *sannyāsīs* or *vairāgīs* at any time in the first decades of the *Sampradāya*, nor has any such provision ever been

¹HARIRĀYAJĪ, pp. 494–538.

²NIRANJANADEVA SHARMĀ, (ed.), *Dosau Bāvana Vaiṣṇavan kī Vārtā* (Mathurā: Shrī Govardhana Granthamālā Kāryālaya, 1966), pp. 24–30.

³Ibid., pp. 1–14.

⁴Ibid., pp. 14–17.

⁵Ibid., pp. 17–24.

⁶PRABHU DAYĀLA MĪTALA, *Aṣṭachāpa-Paricaya* (Mathurā: Agravāla Press, 1950), pp. 368–369.

added. As has been seen from Vallabhācārya's own writings and from his own example, no special place was given by Vallabhācārya to those who had renounced the world and the practice of *sannyāsa* or *vairāgya* (*sannyāsa* implies some sort of formal vow of renunciation, *vairāgya* simply indicates a strong personal disgust for the worldly life and a personal decision to cut oneself away from that life) was discouraged for all but the most advanced *sevakas*. Finally, when one of the *sevakas* of Vallabhācārya's *Sampradāya* did become a *vairāgī*, he did so because his attachment to Shri Kṛṣṇa had become so strong that he had no more interest in anything but Shri Kṛṣṇa. *Vairāgya* in the *Sampradāya* would not be entered as an ascetic practice or for any mental, spiritual, or physical discipline or for the attainment of any desire. Since most Indian religious sects sooner or later develop ascetic offshoots, it seems likely that—regardless of Vallabhācārya's attitudes on the subject of world renunciation—if Vallabhācārya and his descendants had not maintained the precedent of marrying, an ascetic order would have grown up within the *Sampradāya*.

The second important effect of the story of the divine command to marry that was given to Vallabhācārya revolves around the function of spiritual guidance in the *Sampradāya*. During Vallabhācārya's lifetime every person, of either sex, of any age, of any caste, who entered into the *Sampradāya*, into the first and *ādhibhautika* step towards Truth could receive his initiation—that is, his direct contact with the divine (*Brahmasambandha*)—from no one but Vallabhācārya himself. Only one individual had been manifested on earth as the *Mukhāvatāra* (see p. 22 above) of Bhagavān with the power to destroy human impurities: Vallabhācārya; and only one individual had received the direct divine command to effect the joining of the human and the divine (see pp. 17–19 above): Vallabhācārya. Among the followers of Vallabhācārya, there was only one source of ultimate spiritual instruction and that source was Vallabhācārya himself. To be sure, there were those among Vallabhācārya's disciples who had mastered his doctrines, as, for example, his first initiate Dāmodaradāsa Harasānī who is said to have given instruction in those doctrines to Vallabhācārya's own younger son Viṭṭhalanāthajī,¹ and there were many *sevakas* who expressed his doctrines through their lives. But, these people could provide no more than intellectual assistance; none of them could fill the all-important office of giver of the *Brahmasambandha*. The *Brahmasambandha* could be given only by Vallabhācārya and the reservation of this office to him was absolute. Nor could the *Brahmasambandha* be bypassed for without it one could not enter the *Sampradāya* and the chance of deliverance (*uddhāra*)

¹HARIRĀYAJĪ, pp. 6–7.

outside of the *Sampradāya* was, to those who accepted Vallabhācārya's teachings, slim indeed.

In the Hindu tradition transcendent knowledge is usually passed from individual to individual not principally through the medium of the written word but orally from guru to *shisya*, from an individual who has realized the transcendent to an individual who desires the transcendent. Since the attainment of Truth without the guidance of a guru is held to be impossible, the place of the guru is elevated, for the *shisya*, to equivalency with that Truth. In the earlier tradition the guru's aid, though most desirable, does not seem to have been considered mandatory for spiritual advancement. In the *Chāndogya Upanishad* (IV. 10.3), one of the oldest *Upanishads*, for example, room seems to be left for some chance, however faint, for spiritual success without a guru when Satyakāma Jābāla says to his teacher:

For I have heard from persons like you, Revered sir, that the knowledge which has been learned from a teacher (*ācārya*) best helps one attain his end....¹

But by the time of the *Shvetāshvatara Upanishad*, one of the latest of the standard *Upanishads*, the position of guru had reached the exalted place which it held in the time of Vallabhācārya and which it still holds in India today. The *Shvetāshvatara Upanishad* (IV. 23) has this to say about the guru :

These subjects which have been declared shine forth to the high-souled one who has the highest devotion for God [*deva*] and for his spiritual teacher [guru] as for God....²

The position of the guru was just as high in the Vallabhācārya *Sampradāya* during Vallabhācārya's lifetime as it was in the rest of the Hindu tradition, but in the Vallabhācārya *Sampradāya* the position of guru was rigidly restricted to one person, Vallabhācārya himself. The problem that arose from this restriction of the office of guru to the founder of the *Sampradāya* was, obviously, the problem of the survival of the *Sampradāya* beyond the lifetime of Vallabhācārya. If only Vallabhācārya could administer the *Brahmasambandha* initiation and if new members had to take the *Brahmasambandha* initiation in order to enter the *Sampradāya*, then clearly the *Sampradāya* would be doomed to wither away and vanish within a generation after the death of Vallabhācārya. Since Vallabhācārya,

¹S. RADHAKRISHNAN, *The Principal Upaniṣads* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1953), p. 412.

²Ibid., p. 750.

as the *Mukhāvatāra* of Shri Kṛṣṇa, was not an ordinary human being, he could not transmit his office of giver of the *Brahmasambandha* to a merely ordinary human, not even to those human *jīvas* who had reached the *alaukika* plane. Only an individual with the same contact with the divine that Vallabhācārya enjoyed could inherit the power to give the *Brahmasambandha*. The problem was solved not just by Vallabhācārya's marriage and his begetting of children, but, above all, by the fact that Shri Kṛṣṇa himself, through his *svarūpa* at Pañḍharapura, had commanded Vallabhācārya to marry and have children. Implicit in this command is Shri Kṛṣṇa's intention to extend to Vallabhācārya's children the supernatural status necessary to them for the administering of the *Brahmasambandha*. This implication, furthermore, is made explicit in that version of the story that the *svarūpa* of Shri Kṛṣṇa (Shri Viṭṭhalanāthajī of Pañḍharapura) told Vallabhācārya that he would incarnate himself as Vallabhācārya's son. Vallabhācārya did have two sons after he had married (as soon as he had received the command to marry, Vallabhācārya stopped his pilgrimage and went to Vijayanagara (in Bellary District of modern Karnātaka state)¹ to get his mother and then went on to Vārāṇasī where he married a girl of his caste whose name was Mahālakṣmī; the marriage took place in either A.D. 1502 or 1504, but Mahālakṣmī was still a girl and did not come to live with Vallabhācārya until sometime between A.D. 1510 and 1512). The first son, Gopīnāthajī, was born in A.D. 1512 and the second, Viṭṭhalanatha, in A.D. 1516. The second son is by far the more important of the two in the history of the *Sampradāya*; he is so important in that history that his status in the *Sampradāya* is only slightly below that of Vallabhācārya himself. It is this second son, as his name indicates, who is accepted as the incarnation of Shri Viṭṭhalanāthajī of Pañḍharapura. The first son was, according to a tradition in the *Sampradāya*, an *avatāra* of Balarāma the elder brother of Shri Kṛṣṇa.² By means of the divine origin thus given to the sons of Vallabhācārya, both of them were able, in turn, to inherit the leadership of the *Sampradāya*. Both were able to grant the *Brahmasambandha* to new members of the *Sampradāya* and had the same potency in this office that Vallabhācārya had. Gopīnātha's lineage came to an end with the untimely death of his only son, but Viṭṭhalanātha's descendants are to be found in India today and are still the only persons who can fill the office of initiating guru in the *Sampradāya*. The divinely-granted ability to bring the human *jīva* into touch with Shri Kṛṣṇa has been successfully transmitted from generation to generation from

¹WILLIAMS, pp. 391–393.

²ALAIN DANIELOU, *Hindu Polytheism* (New York: Bollingen Foundation, 1964), pp. 179–180.

Vallabhācārya to Viṭṭhalanātha to each of the seven sons of Viṭṭhalanātha and through the direct descendants in the male line of those seven sons down to the present day. Through Vallabhācārya's divinely required marriage the spiritual authority and power in the Vallabhācārya *Sampradāya* have been confined within the family of the founder and no *guru-shisya* relationship other than that of a direct male descendant of Vallabhācārya and his followers can give final spiritual satisfaction to a member of the *Sampradāya*.

The last of the three effects of the divine command to marry involves the physical organization of the *Sampradāya*. Before examining the manner in which Shri Kṛṣṇa's command to marry affected the organization of the *Sampradāya*, the exact nature of a *sampradāya* in the Indian tradition should be examined. There is no better place to begin such an examination than with the term "sampradāya" itself. We have been equating the Sanskrit word *sampradāya* with the English word "sect"; this equation is a valid one since both a sect and a *sampradāya* are organized groups built around a particular set of doctrines. Nevertheless, there are certain connotations of "sect" that do not fit *sampradāya* and vice versa. The English word "sect" defines an organized body from the outside, as a group formed to distinguish itself from other organized bodies. For example, though "sect" originates from the Latin verb *sequi* which means "to follow" the etymology has become confused with the Latin verb *secare* "to cut" because of the nuances that "sect" has developed in English usage. "Sect" has a meaning in modern English that signifies a cutting off of one body from other bodies as much as it signifies a group of followers of some particular set of beliefs. The Sanskrit term "sampradāya", on the other hand, defines an organized body from the inside as a group organized for the transmission from generation to generation of a body of doctrines or traditions. The word *sampradāya*, as Joachim Wach explains,

...is not translatable by the term "sect" or "denomination" because that implies secession from a larger body (church). The Indian term does not have so much a negative as a positive connotation, implying a group with special concepts, forms of worship, and adherents to exclusive leadership exercised by an outstanding religious personality or by his physical or spiritual descendant.¹

"*Sampradāya*" is a noun formed from the Sanskrit verbal root *dā* plus

¹ JOACHIM WACH. *Sociology of Religion* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1948), p. 128. For a dictionary definition of the word "sect" see: JOHN P. BETHEL (ed.), *Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary* (Springfield: Merriam and Co., 1960), p. 764.

the prefixes *sam* and *pra* with the basic meaning of “to give up completely” which develops to the meaning “to transmit, hand down by tradition, impart, teach”. The meaning of “*sampradāya*” itself then extends from a “bestower” to “tradition or doctrine that is bestowed by one teacher on another” and finally to “a particular system of religious teaching” or “a sect”.¹ It is to designate a system of religious teaching and the group of individuals who adhere to that system that “*sampradāya*” is used in the Sanskrit and Braj Bhāṣā literature of the Vallabhācārya *Sampradāya*. The emphasis is on the *sampradāya* as a vehicle for the passing down of a set of doctrines which, for the followers of Vallabhācārya’s *Sampradāya* (the word “*sampradāya*” was probably not applied by the followers of Vallabhācārya to themselves until those followers began to develop definite organizational machinery in the time of Viṭṭhalanātha and his seven sons), are the doctrines and practices of the *Puṣtimārga* revealed by Vallabhācārya. It is in the sense of vehicle that the *Sampradāya* is the *ādhibhautika* aspect of the teachings of Vallabhācārya; just as, in Vallabhācārya’s vision of the cosmic order, the *jagat* (world or universe, material creation) is the *ādhibhautika* manifestation of Shri Kṛṣṇa the Parabrahman because it forms the base on which Shri Kṛṣṇa dwells, just so is the *Sampradāya* the base on which Vallabhācārya’s doctrines rest and the vehicle by which they are carried from generation to generation. This sense of vehicle for transmission of doctrine is not a primary meaning of the English word “sect”.

The word “*sampradāya*”, however, also has an important shade of meaning that is very close to the sense of an exclusive body separated from other groups that is so fundamental to the meaning of “sect” in English. Especially in the usage of Vallabhācārya and his followers, this shade of meaning in the word “*sampradāya*” is apparent. A *sampradāya* was, for Vallabhācārya, more than a means of passing down doctrines, it was also a *satsaṅg* (from the Sanskrit *sat*, meaning “true”, “good”, “honest”, and *sāṅga*, meaning “association with”) or society of the righteous. In the sense of *satsaṅg* the *Sampradāya* was a kind of refuge from the ignorance and iniquity of the ordinary world; it was also a way of strengthening the devotion of new members through constant association with older, more experienced *bhaktas*. The *bhakti* movement in general and Vallabhācārya’s movement in particular did not look favourably upon the ordinary world; the goal of the *bhaktimārga* was to replace the *laukika* with the *alaukika* and it was for *sharanam*, refuge from the world, that the *sevakas* who followed Vallabhācārya came to Shri Kṛṣṇa (see p. 22 above). The *Sampradāya* became a fortress inside of which the *sevā* of Shri Kṛṣṇa, the *dharma* required of all *jīvas*,

¹MONIER-WILLIAMS, p. 1175.

was practised and outside of which was the turmoil of the world which had forgotten this *dharma*. By means of the *Sampradāya* the *sevakas* of Shrī Krṣṇa were able to shut out the ways of the worldly, polluted life outside and, at the same time, they were able to give each other help in the practice of the *bhaktimārga* (see verse 10 of the “*Bhaktivardhī*” and verse of 3 of the “*Sannyasanirnayah*”, both quoted on p. 33 above). Ideally, the *sevakas* of Vallabhācārya would not even associate with the members of other *bhaktimārgī* sects. Kṛṣṇadāsa, one of the *aṣṭasakhā*, was observing this restriction against association with members of other sects when he refused to remain in the house of Mīrānbāī (A.D. 1498–1546), the famous Rājasthānī poetess of the *bhaktimārga*,¹ because the members of other sects were also present in her house. In Kṛṣṇadāsa’s own words:

I will stay wherever there are Vaiṣṇava *sevakas* of Shrī Ācāryajī [Vallabhācārya is usually called “Shrī Ācāryaji” in the literature of his *Sampradāya*], but I will not stay with the followers of other sects.²

The complete account may be consulted under *prasanga* 1 of Kṛṣṇadāsa’s *Vārtā* in Part II of this study.

All of this gives a picture of Vallabhācārya’s *Sampradāya* as an exclusive association of *sevakas* intensely loyal to their guru and to their particular *svarūpa* of Shrī Krṣṇa and hostile and suspicious of the outside world while forming a closely knit internal group. As long as Vallabhācārya or one of his sons Gopinātha or Viṭṭhalanātha held the leadership of the *Sampradāya* and performed the initiation of new members and as long as there was only one main temple and *svarūpa*, the *svarūpa* of Shrī Govardhananāthajī in the temple on Govardhana Hill, the *Sampradāya* would remain a tightly-unified whole-firm against the *laukika* life outside. But, at Viṭṭhalanāthajī’s death (in A.D. 1586), *svarūpas* of Shrī Krṣṇa were given to each of his seven sons by his own hand. The precedent had already been set by Vallabhācārya’s divinely-commanded marriage for the passage of the supernatural power to administer the *Brahmasambandha* from father to son. Each of Viṭṭhalanātha’s sons, then, received equally this power to initiate by means of the *Brahmasambandha*; the coupling of the right and ability to initiate together with the possession of a sacred *svarūpa* once owned by Vallabhācārya himself (all of the *svarūpas* which Viṭṭhalanātha gave to his sons were supposed to have belonged to Vallabhācārya) had the natural result of splitting

¹PARASHURĀMA CATURVEDĪ, *Mīrānbāī ki Padāvalī* (Allāhbād : Hindī Sāhitya Sammelana, 1957), pp. 20–27.

²HARIRĀYAJĪ, p. 499.

the *Sampradāya* into seven separate, but equal, centres. This would be an inevitable outcome, determined by the structure of the *Sampradāya* with its primary emphasis on absolute loyalty to the guru who has given the *Brahmasambandha* and to the *svarūpa* of Shri Kṛṣṇa possessed by the guru. After the division, the Vallabhācārya *Sampradāya* was still, in terms of thought and practice, a unit, for the *Puṣṭimārga* taught by Vallabhācārya was still the only version of the *bhaktimārga* followed in each of the new centres. Greater fragmentation set in through the generations, with each direct descendant of Vallabhācārya in the male line able to establish his own following of *sevakas* whom he had initiated. There was never, nor is there now, any sort of overall authority for the *Sampradāya* as a whole since the division of guruship at the death of Viṭṭhalanātha; each guru is the final authority among his followers. The eldest direct descendants (male line) of the seven sons of Viṭṭhalanātha do have an enhanced status in the *Sampradāya* because they hold the most revered divine *svarūpas*; among them the descendant of Giridhara, the eldest of Viṭṭhalanātha's sons, has by far the greatest spiritual status because he has the original Shri Govardhananāthaji (usually called simply "Shri Nāthaji") *svarūpa* and his centre, located at Nāthadvāra in Udaipura District of Rājasthān, attracts great numbers of pilgrims from all of the centres of the *Sampradāya*. When spiritual authority was passed down from Vallabhācārya to his sons, the eventual fragmentation of the *Sampradāya* became only a matter of time. After that precedent had been set, there could be no way to keep the spiritual authority in the sect from continuing down through each of Vallabhācārya's descendants.

Several scholars important in the history of the *Sampradāya* appeared from among the direct descendants of Vallabhācārya after the division of the guruship on the death of Viṭṭhalanātha. One of these was the fourth son of Viṭṭhalanātha, Gokulanātha (A.D. 1552–1641)¹; another was Harirāya, a great-grandson of Viṭṭhalanātha, who put the *Caurāsi Vaiṣṇavan ki Vārtā* into its present form, he lived from A.D. 1591–1711;² and a third was Puruṣottama, seventh in descent from Vallabhācārya, who lived from A.D. 1668–1725. After the time of Puruṣottama the *Sampradāya* seems to have gone into decline. The low point was reached with a celebrated trial involving one of the gurus (who are addressed with the title "Mahārāja") which was held in the Bombay Supreme Court in 1862. An account of the trial that is hostile to the *Sampradāya* can be found in *The History of the Sect of Mahārājas or Vallabhāchāryas in*

¹HARISHANKARAJI, pp. 41–44.

²PRABHU DAYĀLA MĪTALA, *Gosvāmi Harirāyaji kā Pada-Sāhitya* (Mathurā : Sāhitya Samsthāna, 1962), pp. 5–9.

³HARISHANKARAJI, pp. 97–99.

*Western India*¹ by Karsandas Mulji, the defendant in the case. A favourable account of the *Sampradāya* during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries can be found in *Sri Vallabhacharya, Life, Teachings and Movement* by Bhai Manilal C. Parekh.² At the present time the *Sampradāya* is most influential among the commercial castes of Rājasthān, Gujarāt, and the city of Bombay. There is great deal of vitality in the *Sampradāya* today, especially in its centres in the city of Bombay.

THE SHASTRARTHA AT VIJAYANAGARA

After he had married in Vārāṇasī, Vallabhācārya set out on his third and final pilgrimage tour of India. It was in the course of this tour that Vallabha had his greatest philosophical victory over the followers of the *Māyāvād* (primarily made up of philosophers belonging to the school of Shankarācārya). By this victory Vallabha received the title “Ācārya” (a teacher or spiritual guide, one who gives instruction in matters of conduct, manner of action, traditions, or precepts)³ and evidently acquired a great deal of prestige, at least among Vaiṣnavas. This victory, which took place at a great *shāstrārtha* held under the auspices of King Kṛṣṇadevarāya of Vijayanagara, is the third event of great importance that took place during Vallabhācārya’s three tours around India. By this victory, Vallabhācārya, according to the traditions of his *Sampradāya* acquired the fame and scholarly recognition that assured him a place among the greatest scholars and religious thinkers of India. According to the traditions of the *Sampradāya*, Vallabhācārya’s great victory at Vijayanagara took place when he went with his mother to her brother’s house in Vijayanagara just after his father’s death at the temple of Shrī Veṅkaṭeshvara (see p. 27 above) If that dating were accurate and the victory did take place at that time, which would be just at the beginning of Vallabhācārya’s first journey around India, then Vallabhācārya would have been a boy of no more than twelve or thirteen. But, it is not because of such extreme youth that Vallabhācārya’s exploit at Vijayanagara cannot be placed so early. After all, the traditional accounts and dates are to be accepted wherever possible in this study. Furthermore, since Vallabhācārya was already supposed to have won one *shāstrārtha*—the one held at Jagannātha-Purī (see pp. 26–27 above)—at the age of ten, his youthfulness alone can be no bar to his having again overcome experienced adult philosophers at a *shāstrārtha*. The difficulty in the early date lies in the time of the reign of the sponsoring king, Kṛṣṇadeva-

¹ MULJI, Appendix, pp. 1–183.

² PAREKH, pp. 329–378.

³ MONIER-WILLIAMS, p. 131.

rāya. The traditional accounts agree that the sponsor of the *shāstrārtha* was Kṛṣṇadevarāya and that he was king of Vijayanagara. Kṛṣṇadevarāya, however, did not ascend the throne of Vijayanagara until the year A.D. 1509,¹ and so would not have been ruling as king of Vijayanagara when Vallabha was in the city of Vijayanagara (A.D. 1490–1493) at the beginning of his first pilgrimage tour. The ruler during the period 1490–1493 was the regent Narasa Nāyaka,² but he is never mentioned in the sectarian accounts of the *shāstrārtha* at Vijayanagara. It seems clear, then, that Vallabhācārya's victory at Vijayanagara had to have taken place sometime between 1509 and the end of his third pilgrimage (which ended between A.D. 1510 and 1512). The date 1509 would fit in best with the chronology of the events of the third pilgrimage.³

It is said that Vallabhācārya had been staying at his ancestral village of Kāṅkaravāḍa in the Telugu country for several days when word reached him that a great philosophical debate (*shāstrārtha*, literally, “[a debate on] the meaning of scripture”) was in progress in Vijayanagara under the sponsorship of King Kṛṣṇadevarāya. Furthermore, the Vaiṣṇava philosophers—among whom were representatives of the schools of Madhvācārya, Nimbārka, Viśnusvāmī, and Rāmānujācārya (in other words, scholars from all of the leading Vaiṣṇava schools of philosophy)—were being bested by the philosophers of the *Māyāvāda*. Vallabha naturally could not allow the Vaiṣṇava point of view to be defeated by that of the *Māyāvādīs*, so he went immediately to the city of Vijayanagara and asked Ācārya Vyāsatīrtha of the Mādhva Sampradāya, who was acting as leader of the Vaiṣṇavas in the competition, if he might enter on the Vaiṣṇava side. Ācārya Vyāsatīrtha admitted Vallabhācārya with pleasure, and, as a result of Vallabhācārya's marvelous learning and skill at debate, the tables were turned and the followers of the *Māyāvāda* had to accept defeat. The credit for the victory was given by King Kṛṣṇadevarāya and by the Vaiṣṇava philosophers to Vallabhācārya and Vallabhācārya received lavish presents of gold from the king (out of the gifts Vallabhācārya is said to have kept only seven gold coins and to have distributed the rest among Brāhmaṇas). As a result of his impressive victory over the *Māyāvādīs*, Vallabhācārya was offered the ācāryaship of two of the Vaiṣṇava *sampradāyas*; as ācārya of a *sampradāya* Vallabhācārya would have had final authority in matters of doctrine and the right to initiate new members into that *sampradāya*. The first ācāryaship was that of the Mādhva *Sampradāya* and was offered by Ācārya Vyāsatīrtha; Vallabhācārya turned this offer down. The

¹ MAJUMDAR, vol. VI, p. 309.

² *Ibid.*, p. 303.

³ MĪTALA, *Aṣṭachāpa-Paricaya*, pp. 6–7.

second offer, made by Vilvamarigala the *ācārya* of the sect founded by Viṣṇusvāmī, was accepted by Vallabhācārya and he was acclaimed as the *ācārya* of that *sampradāya*. Very little is known about the philosophical doctrines of Viṣṇusvāmī,¹ so no judgement can be made about the tradition that Vallabhācārya accepted the *ācāryaship* of the sect because the philosophical system of Viṣṇusvāmī was so close to his own *Shuddhādvaita* system (which will be discussed at length in the next chapter of this study). The sect of Viṣṇusvāmī is supposed to have been in decline, with very few adherents, at the time of Vallabhācārya's acceptance of the *ācāryaship*. Within the Vallabhācārya *Sampradāya* the majority opinion is that Vallabhācārya had no human guru and belonged to no human philosophical tradition or school and that he accepted the *ācāryaship* of Viṣṇusvāmī's *sampradāya* in order to increase the prestige and fame of his own doctrines.² A minority opinion holds that Vallabhācārya was a direct philosophical descendant of Viṣṇusvāmī.³ The scholarly opinion does not accept any real connection between the thought of Vallabhācārya and that of Viṣṇusvāmī.^{4,5,6} The importance of the victory of Vallabhācārya at Vijayanagara and of his subsequent installation as *ācārya* of the sect of Viṣṇusvāmī, as far as the members of his own *Sampradāya* are concerned, lies in the consequent establishment of Vallabhācārya as a major philosopher and of his doctrines as the equal of any other doctrinal system within the Vaiṣṇava movement. Beyond this, Vallabhācārya's victory was the climactic conquest of the doctrines of the *Māyāvāda*, demonstrating once and for all the superiority of the Vaiṣṇava explanation of man's relationship to the universe and to the divine over the explanation given by the followers of *Māyāvāda*. The reason for the continuing philosophical and doctrinal hostility between Vaiṣṇavas and *Māyāvādīs* in Indian religious history lies in the basic difference of orientation taught in the two systems of thought. For Vaiṣṇavas ultimate responsibility for deliverance of the human *jīva* from the ignorance of the world lies in the hands of a personal Supreme Being and the only correct course for the *jīva* to follow is that of constant, selfless devotion to that Supreme Being. That constant devotion is, of

¹DASGUPTA, vol. IV, pp. 382–383.

²SHĀSTRĪ, pp. 39–43.

³MULJI, p. 35.

⁴RAJ BAHADUR AMARNATH RAY, "The Viṣṇusvāmin Riddle", *Annals of the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute*, XIV (Poona, April-July, 1932–1933), Parts III–IV, pp. 161–181.

⁵HELMUTH VON GLASENAPP, "Die Lehre Vallabhācāryas", *Zeitschrift für Indologie und Iranistik*, IX (Leipzig, 1933–1934), 322–330.

⁶G. H. BHATT, "A Further Note on Vishṇusvāmi and Vallabhāchārya", *Proceedings and Transactions of the Eighth All India Oriental Conference* (Mysore, December, 1935), pp. 322–328.

course, the *bhaktimārga*. For those philosophers called *Māyāvādīs* by the Vaiṣṇavas, on the other hand, the ultimate responsibility for deliverance of the human *jīva* lies in the hands of the *jīva* itself and the only sure course for the *jīva* to follow is the *jñānamārga*, the way of the reliance on self-effort to cultivate knowledge of the True State.

SEVA IN VALLABHACARYA'S SAMPRADAYA

The fourth major event that took place in the course of Vallabhācārya's three pilgrimages was a continuing development rather than one single event. This event, or development, was the establishment of the form of worship called "sevā" that is still today carried on in every temple belonging to the gurus of the Vallabhācārya *Sampradāya* and which has come to be the hallmark of the *Sampradāya*. The establishment of this *sevā* by Vallabhācārya cannot be isolated to any one pilgrimage, but was, rather, a development running through all three; nor did this development cease with the end of the third and last pilgrimage. The beginning of the establishment of worship through *sevā* came at the founding of the *Sampradāya* in A.D. 1494 when, after he had received directly from Shri Kṛṣṇa the *Brahmasambandha* mantra and the obligation to use it for the deliverance of *jīvas*, Vallabhācārya identified the mysterious image that had risen out of sacred Govardhana Hill as Shri Govardhananāthajī, the *svarūpa* of Shri Kṛṣṇa Parabrahman. At that time, Vallabhācārya was able only to set up a rude hut over the *svarūpa*; a local man, one Rāmadāsa Cauhāna—acting according to tradition on the command of the *svarūpa* Shri Govardhananāthajī—went to Vallabhācārya and asked to be allowed to become his *sevaka* (i.e., to be initiated into Vallabhācārya's newly-founded *Sampradāya*) and to be given the task of maintaining the *sevā* of Shri Govardhananāthajī.¹ Vallabhācārya then initiated Rāmadāsa and put him in charge of the *sevā* in the little shrine of Shri Govardhananāthajī. As has already been mentioned (see above on p. 28, a large, beautiful temple of dressed stone was begun in A.D. 1500 to replace the original shrine and was completed in 1520. But, it can be assumed that the *sevā* form of worship had been established, probably in simplified form, when the first crude hut was erected over the *svarūpa* of Shri Kṛṣṇa. When the large temple was completed, the *sevā* was, no doubt, elaborated. After the deaths of Vallabhācārya and his elder son Gopinātha, when Viṭṭhalanātha held the leadership of the *Sampradāya*, the *sevā* was made much more imposing and luxurious than it had been before. The basic form of *sevā* was, never-

¹HARIRĀYAJĪ, pp. 252-255.

theless, the same from the time of the first modest shrine under the care of Rāmadāsa Cauhāna to the temples of the *Sampradāya* today. This basic form of *sevā* in the temples of the *Sampradāya* is based on the life of Shrī Kṛṣṇa in Braj as that life is depicted in the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*; by the performance of the *sevā*, the *bhaktas* of Shrī Kṛṣṇa are able to feel, to the extent allowed by their strength of devotion, the emotions of *alaukika* love expressed by Shrī Kṛṣṇa's *līlā* in Braj. Physically, the *bhaktas* can only enjoy the observation (*darshana*) of the *svarūpa* of Shrī Kṛṣṇa, but inwardly, the *bhaktas* are supposed to experience the actual *līlā* being performed by Shrī Kṛṣṇa.

The *sevā* of Shrī Kṛṣṇa as it is performed in the temples of the *Sampradāya* and as it was established by Vallabhācārya is divided into two primary types. The first type of *sevā* follows Shrī Kṛṣṇa through a typical day as the divine cowherd Kṛṣṇa Gopāla (the word "Gopāla" means "Protector of Cows" and is often used as an epithet of Shrī Kṛṣṇa) in Braj; the second type of *sevā* follows Shrī Kṛṣṇa through the seasons and holidays of the year.

The first type of *sevā* consists of eight periods that occur at more or less regular intervals through the day from early morning until evening. Each period is called a period of *darshana* and lasts about fifteen minutes; the *sevakas* (as *bhaktas* or devotees are called in the terminology of the *Sampradāya*) are not allowed into the sanctum of the temple at any time other than the periods of *darshana* because the temple (in the Vallabhācārya *Sampradāya* a temple of one of the *svarūpas* of Shrī Kṛṣṇa is not called a "*mandir*", the usual term used to designate a Hindu temple in the Indo-European languages of North India, but a "*havelī*", a word meaning "house" or "mansion") is considered to be the private dwelling of the *svarūpa* of Shrī Kṛṣṇa and to enter at any time other than the appointed times would be to violate the privacy of the *svarūpa*. The *darshana* is congregational, with all of the *sevakas* gathering together to view the *svarūpa* in the sanctum of the temple. No offerings are brought to the *svarūpa* in the temple, but the *sevakas* may make contributions of money at the gate as they enter the temple. After the *darshana* is over the *sevakas* may take *prasāda* (food that has been offered to the *svarūpa* during the *darshana*) distributed at the gate of the temple. Since Vallabhācārya and his son Viṭṭhalanāthajī initiated persons from Muslim, untouchable, and Shūdra backgrounds—Kṛṣṇadāsa, one of the *āśiasakhā* [see Kṛṣṇadāsa's *vārtā* in Part II of this study] was a Shūdra¹—as well as from the Āryan *varṇas*) *sevakas* of any age, any caste and either sex can attend the *darshana* periods. In the line with the exclusive nature of the *Sampradāya* as a *satsang* (see pp. 40–41 above), non-Hindus are not

¹Ibid., p. 504.

admitted to the *darshanas* held in the temples belonging to the *Sampradāya*—though such people are able to witness *darshanas* held outside of the consecrated temple of one of the divine *svarūpas* (as, for example, when *darshana* is being given in the course of a *svarūpa*'s pilgrimage away from the home temple). The *darshana* periods are as follows:

Maṅgalā.—At this *darshana* period, the *svarūpa* is awakened from its sleep of the previous night and is fed a light breakfast of fruits. In the summer the *maṅgalā darshana* takes place at 5.00 A.M. and in winter it is held two hours later.

Shṛīgāra.—At this *darshana* period, the *svarūpa* is dressed in the clothing to be worn that day. In the hot season the clothes are scanty and light, in the wet season a “raincoat” is provided, and in the cold season socks and warm clothing are put on the *svarūpa*. Members of the *Sampradāya* often point out the significance of the different clothing given to the divine *svarūpa* according to season so that the *svarūpa* may always be comfortable; it shows, they say, that the followers of Vallabhācārya know that the divine *svarūpas* are real, living beings and must be made comfortable, while the *mūrtis* found in ordinary Hindu temples are lifeless pieces of stone or wood that merely represent a deity and so may be dressed in any kind of costume regardless of weather. The difference is a matter of the *laukika* and *alaukika*: the *sevaka* wants to feel *bhāva* (feeling of intense love, experience of the actual presence of the divine being) of devotion to his Lord (*prabhu*) and so he tries to bring himself into the *alaukika* attitude in which the *svarūpa* is alive and present; to one whose attitude is *laukika* the *svarūpa* seems to be an inanimate object. Viṭṭhalanātha, the younger son of Vallabhācārya, gathered wealth for the express purpose of making the *darshana-sevā* more beautiful and lavish. So from about A.D. 1546, when Viṭṭhalanātha returned to Govardhana Hill from a highly-successful fund-raising tour of Gujarat, until the present the clothing provided for the *svarūpas* of the *Sampradāya* has been costly and ornate.¹ In Vallabhācārya's time the clothing was probably comparatively simple and modest. This *darshana* period takes place at about 6:00 in the morning in the summer and at about 7:30 A.M. in the cold season.

Gvāla.—This is the *darshana* period at which the *svarūpa* is presented as being out in the pasture with the cows. This period takes place at 7:00 A.M. in the summer and at 8:00 or 9:00 in the winter.

Rājabhoga.—This is the main meal of the day for the *svarūpa*. Since the time of Viṭṭhalanātha the *rājabhoga darshana* has required a wondrous array of rich and luxurious foods, all of which are “pure” foods made

¹PRABHU DAYĀLA MĪTALA, *Braj ke Dharma-Sampradāyon kā Itihāsa* (Delhi : National Publishing House, 1968), pp. 250–251.

with milk products, sugar, and certain kinds of vegetables.¹ The *rājabhoga* takes place at 9:30 A.M. in the summer and at 10:00 in the winter. After the *rājabhoga* the *svarūpa* of the Lord is given a nap.

Uttihāpana.—The *svarūpa* is awakened from the nap. This will occur at 2:00 P.M. in the summer and an hour later in the winter.

Bhoga.—At 3:30 P.M. in the summer, or a half-hour later in the winter, the *svarūpa* of Shri Krṣṇa is given a light lunch.

Sandhyārati.—At this *darshana* period, the *svarūpa* is given the evening meal and then honoured with lighted lamps. This takes place at 5:00 in the evening in both summer and winter.

Shayana.—The *svarūpa* is put to sleep for the night and food is left by his bed in case he should become hungry during the night. The temple is then closed. This takes place at 5:30 P.M. in the summer and at 6:00 P.M. in the winter. The work of dressing the *svarūpa* and offering food to the *svarūpa* during the periods of *darshana* is done by groups of Brāhmaṇas called “*bhītariyās*” (“those who are within [the temple]”). These *bhītariyās* must keep themselves pure and undefiled; only they may touch the divine *svarūpa*. The first *bhītariyās* were Bengālī Brāhmaṇas from Bṛndābana, evidently followers of the *bhaktimārga* taught by Krṣṇa Caitanya (see pp. 31–32 above), entrusted with the *sevā* of Shri Govardhananāthaji in the new temple finished in A.D. 1520. At the same time that he put the Bengālī Brāhmaṇas in charge of the *sevā* in the new temple, Vallabhācārya made Krṣṇadāsa, one of the *astasakhā*, the manager of the business of the temple.

The other type of *sevā*, which is built around the festivals and holidays of the year, also has become elaborated—again from the time of Viṭṭhalanātha—but is supposed to preserve the same celebrations instituted by Vallabhācārya. The *Holi* season in March or April is a festive time in the temples of the *Sampradāya*; the holiday celebrating Shri Krṣṇa’s birth on earth, *Janmāṣṭmi*—occurring in August or September, is, as with all Vaiṣṇava sects, a major holiday with mid-night *darshana* in temples of the *Sampradāya*; *Nāga-pañcamī*, the festival of serpents in July or August, is an important observance in the *Sampradāya* since it was on that holiday that the *svarūpa* of Shri Govardhananāthaji first appeared (see p. 22 above); the festival of *Annakūṭa*, in October–November,² is another important celebration since it commemorates the offerings that the cowherds of Braj gave to the sacred Govardhana Hill instead of to Indra on the advice of Shri Krṣṇa.

Vallabhācārya began the practice of having *kīrtanas* (hymns of

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 265.

² RĀMAPRATĀPA TRIPĀTHĪ, *Hinduon ke Vrata, Parva, aur Tyauhāra* (Allāhābād: Loka-bhāratī Prakāshana, 1966), p. 270.

praise) sung before the *svarūpa* of Shrī Kṛṣṇa as a part of the *darshana-sevā*. These *kīrtanas* were intended to intensify the *alaukika* atmosphere that was supposed to surround each *darshana* period. The *kīrtanas* described the *līlās* of Shrī Kṛṣṇa vividly and beautifully; different *kīrtanas* were sung for each *darshana* period and for each holiday celebration. Later, Viṭṭhalanāthaji added musicians to the *kīrtana* singers and had artists paint background scenes for the *darshana* periods. All of this was intended to heighten the *bhāva* of the *sevakas* as much as possible so that deep attachment to Shrī Kṛṣṇa and his eternal *līlas* might be implanted in the hearts of the *sevakas*. Today, the *kīrtanas* of the *aṣṭasakhā* (called the “*aṣṭachāpa*” when considered from the standpoint of their literary abilities only) are still sung during the *darshana* periods of modern temples of the *Sampradāya*. As has been mentioned above (see pp. 11–13), since the poets of the *aṣṭasakhā* are the eternal companions of Shrī Kṛṣṇa, their poetry is most likely to evoke powerful *bhaktibhāva* in the hearts of listeners. The first member of the *aṣṭasakhā* to be initiated was Kumbhanadāsa; Vallabhācārya gave him the duty of singing *kīrtana* before Shrī Govardhananāthaji, but, since he was a householder, Kumbhanadāsa was not able to give his full time to this duty. Sūradāsa was the first full-time *kīrtana* composer and singer; he was followed by Paramānandadāsa, who also devoted himself to singing *kīrtanas* full time. Kṛṣṇadāsa was the last of the *aṣṭasakhā* to be initiated by Vallabhācārya. Collections of the poetry of each of the four members of the *aṣṭasakhā* who were initiated by Vallabhācārya have been published.¹ The other four members of the *aṣṭasakhā* were initiated by Viṭṭhalanātha.

Before leaving the subject of the form of *sevā* which was established by Vallabhācārya at the temple of Shrī Govardhananāthaji on Govardhana Hill in Braj and elaborated by Viṭṭhalanātha in the last half of the sixteenth century, something must be said about the distinction between the *sevā* of Vallabhācārya’s *Sampradāya* and the ordinary worship—which is called “*pūjā*”—that is practised in other Hindu temples. The distinction between these forms of worship is, like so many of the differences between the Vallabhācārya *Sampradāya* and the outside world, primarily a difference in mental orientation, in attitude. That this should be so is not at all surprising when one considers that the

¹For Sūradāsa: Sūradāsa, *Sūrasāgara*, ed. NANDADULĀRI VĀJAPĒYĪ (2 vols.; Vārāṇasi: Nāgaripracārīṇī Sabhā, 1965). Sūradāsa, *Sūrasāgara*, ed. JAVĀHARALĀLA CĀTURVEDĪ (Calcutta: Bijnānī Trust, 1965).

For Kumbhanadāsa: Kumbhanadāsa, *Kumbhanadāsa*, ed. VRAJABHŪṢĀNA SHARMĀ and K. SHĀSTRĪ (Kāṅkaroli: Vidyā Vibhāga, 1954).

For Paramānandadāsa: Paramānandadāsa, *Paramānanda Sāgara*, ed. GOVARDHANA NĀTHA SHUKLA (Aligarh: Bhārata Prakāshana Mandira, 1958).

For Kṛṣṇadāsa: Kṛṣṇadāsa, *Kṛṣṇadāsa (Pada-Saṅgraha)*, ed. VRAJABHŪṢĀNA SHARMĀ (Kāṅkaroli: Vidyā Vibhāga, 1963).

Vallabhācārya *Sampradāya* is the foundation of a religious system that is meant to transform—to purify—human attitudes about the world and its relationship to the divine. The difference between *sevā* and *pūjā* is, then, exactly the difference between the *laukika* and the *alaukika* (see pp. 9–11 above), between the *ādhibhautika* and the *ādhidaivika* (see pp. 14–15 above), between *mūrti* and *svarūpa* (see p. 48 above), and between *mandira* and *havelī* (see p. 47 above). The culmination of this distinction will lie in the differentiation of the *maryādāmārga* (the way of strict obedience to scriptural and traditional laws) from the *Puṣṭimārga* (the way of reliance on the grace [*anugraha*] of Shrī Kṛṣṇa, the way taught by Vallabhācārya for freedom from the delusion and impurity of ordinary life); this differentiation will be discussed in another chapter of this study. All of the above distinctions taught by Vallabhācārya involve differences in attitudes and interpretations; to use the philosophical language for the final example of this kind of distinction, *Parabrahman* (the Supreme Being, Shrī Kṛṣṇa) is the *jagat* (the physical world) but the *jagat* is only a tiny fragment of the infinite, eternal being of *Parabrahman*. The difficulty is to realize that this relationship is true and to live according to it.

The act of *pūjā* is, according to Vallabhācārya, a selfish action, it is a giving of an offering to the divine in expectation of receiving a reward from the divine. In doing *pūjā* one does not think of the comfort of the divinity except in that the giving of something beneficial to the divinity will bring the divinity's aid to the giver. *Sevā*, on the other hand, is service (*sevā*), disinterested service to the divine simply because it is the duty and the delight of man to serve the divine and not because of desire for some benefit from the divine. *Sevā*, in short, is unselfish love for and service of the divine being, while *pūjā* is worship done for the doer's benefit. There are certain physical differences between organized *pūjā* and organized *sevā*—for example, worshippers doing *pūjā* usually offer their offering and perform their worship as isolated individuals while, on the other hand, *sevakas* perform *sevā* as a group, as a *satsaṅg*, and do not offer gifts directly before the divine *svarūpa*—but the real difference is in the attitude within the heart of the worshipper. It is possible to perform unselfish worship in the physical form of *pūjā* and it is possible to perform selfish worship in the outward form of *sevā*. There are three forms of *sevā*: the first is done by the body, as in singing the hymns that praise Shrī Kṛṣṇa and describe his *līlās*; the second is done by means of wealth, as in giving financial donations to the *Sampradāya*; and the third is mental *sevā*, the natural, effortless flowing of the thoughts to Shrī Kṛṣṇa. Of these three, all of which are to be practised, Vallabhācārya teaches that the third is best because it is its own reward and so can have no selfish element. One who does mental *sevā* of Shrī Kṛṣṇa desires only

the doing of the *sevā* and nothing more. Such *sevā* is the *svadharma* (innate duty) of the human *jīva*. One who does such *sevā* has become pure.

THE FAMILY OF VALLABHACARYA

Before closing this chapter, a brief summary of Vallabhācārya's last years and of the lives of his two sons Gopīnātha and Viṭṭhalanātha must be given.

Vallabhācārya, after he entered the householder stage of life, evidently maintained two houses; one was at Adaila—just across the Yamunā River from Allāhbād—and the other was at Caraṇāṭa, not far from Vārāṇasī. Vallabhācārya's first son, Gopīnātha, was born in A.D. 1512 in the village of Adaila and his second son, whose name was Viṭṭhalanātha, was born in Caraṇāṭa. Viṭṭhalanātha was born in A.D. 1516. Vallabhācārya kept his main residence at Adaila and made periodic trips to the spiritual centre of his *Sampradāya* at Govardhana Hill in Braj. It was probably at this period in his life that Vallabhācārya worked on his great commentaries: the *Anubhāṣya* (on the *Brahma-sūtra*), the latter part of which is by Viṭṭhalanātha, and the *Subodhinī* (on the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*), which, since the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* was the key scripture for Vallabhācārya, is his most important work. In A.D. 1531, as has been mentioned above (see p. 32), Vallabhācārya took vows of *sannyāsa* and retired to perform yogic disciplines on the bank of the Gangā in the city of Vārāṇasī. After a little over a month spent on the bank of the Gangā, Vallabhācārya had his two sons and some of his chief followers summoned and, when they arrived, delivered the leadership of the *Sampradāya* to his eldest son Gopīnātha, who was then nineteen years old. After the leadership of the sect had thus been provided for, Vallabhācārya, according to sectarian accounts, entered the waters of the Gangā. As Vallabhācārya stood in the river, he was suddenly enveloped in a brilliant flash of light and slowly ascended into the sky. After this, he was never again seen on earth.

Gopīnātha had shown great talent in scholarship in his youth, but he has left very little mark on the development of the *Sampradāya*. According to sectarian tradition, he was not interested in making changes in the organization of the *Sampradāya* and he did not gather together a following like the eighty-four (*caurāśī*) Vaiṣṇavas initiated by his father or the two hundred and fifty-two (*dosau bāvana*) Vaiṣṇavas initiated by his younger brother. Gopīnātha is sometimes said to have been a *maryādāmārgī* (one who gives prime consideration to the keeping of Vedic injunctions and social laws of the world) rather than a *bhaktimārgī*, though it is difficult to know what his views were since only one small book written by him

has survived and since he has been completely overshadowed by his younger brother in the traditions of the *Sampradāya*. It was during Gopinātha's leadership of the *Sampradāya* that complaints against the behaviour of the Bengālī Vaiṣṇavas who were conducting the *sevā* of Shri Govardhananāthajī first began to be heard. Kṛṣṇadāsa, the manager of the temple of Shri Govardhananāthajī, was particularly anxious for the Bengālis to be expelled. It was said that the Bengālis were sending offerings meant for Shri Govardhananāthajī temple to their own guru in Brñdāvana, that they were worshipping a goddess beside the *svarūpa* of Shri Govardhananāthajī, and that they did not conduct themselves in the manner of *sevakas* within the Vallabhācārya *Sampradāya*. Gopinātha, however, would do nothing about the Bengālis since they had been given their duties by Vallabhācārya. It was not until about A.D. 1550 that the Bengālis had been completely removed from Govardhana Hill (which would be seven years after Gopinātha's death in A.D. 1543)¹ and it was not until A.D. 1572² that the Bengālis finally gave up trying to get back their former position at Shri Govardhananāthajī's temple. It was in the last-mentioned year that the Bengālis tried to get the Mughal emperor Akbar to have them restored, but the Emperor refused to do so. The whole story is included in the *vārtā* of Kṛṣṇadāsa in the second part of this study.³

Before the Bengālis had been at last discouraged from trying to be restored to the *sevā* of Shri Govardhananāthajī, another difficulty arose in the *Sampradāya*. In 1543 Gopinātha had died leaving only one son, a boy of twelve named Puruṣottama. Because the boy was a minor he did not inherit the leadership of the *Sampradāya*; instead, it went to Viṭṭhalanātha. Later, when the boy approached the age of eighteen—the age of maturity, his mother and some other members of the *Sampradāya* began saying that he should rightfully replace Viṭṭhalanātha as head of the *Sampradāya*. At the same time as this faction favouring Puruṣottama was growing, Viṭṭhalanātha and Kṛṣṇadāsa had become very cool toward each other because of complaints that had reached Viṭṭhalanātha of improper relations between Kṛṣṇadāsa and a wealthy widow, Gangābāī, who was a devotee of Shri Govardhananāthajī. The situation deteriorated to the point that Kṛṣṇadāsa joined the faction pressing for the replacement of Viṭṭhalanātha with Puruṣottama as the head of the *Sampradāya*. As a result of the squabble, Kṛṣṇadāsa barred Viṭṭhalanātha from entering the temple of Shri Govardhananāthajī. For six months in 1549–1550 Viṭṭhalanātha could not have *darshana* of the

¹MITALA, *Braj ke Dharma* . . . pp. 248–249.

²Ibid., pp. 250–251.

³HARIRĀYAJĪ, pp. 500–510.

divine *svarūpa* and had to suffer the agony of *viraha* (the pain of separation). In 1550 Puruṣottama died suddenly and the supporters of Viṭṭhalanātha were able to force Kṛṣṇadāsa to readmit the now-unchallenged leader of the *Sampradāya* to the temple. The account of this dispute is also given in the translation of Kṛṣṇadāsa's *vārtā* in Part II of this study.¹ Viṭṭhalanātha forgave Kṛṣṇadāsa for his actions and left him in charge of the temple on Govardhana Hill. It would, of course, have been very difficult for even Viṭṭhalanātha to have removed Kṛṣṇadāsa since Kṛṣṇadāsa had been revealed by Vallabhācārya to be one of the eternal companions of Shri Kṛṣṇa.

Now that Viṭṭhalanātha was firmly established as the divinely-ordained guru of the *Sampradāya*, Gopinātha's widow found her position intolerable. On top of having to bear the loss of her son, she could not endure living under the authority of Viṭṭhalanātha. Consequently, she decided to return to her relatives in the Telugu country and she did so, taking with her her husband's entire library. Since this library contained the only manuscripts of all of Vallabhācārya's works preserved within the family, it was immensely valuable to the *Sampradāya*. Viṭṭhalanātha, upon finding his efforts to recover the library unsuccessful, was forced to search for copies of the missing texts both within the membership of the *Sampradāya* and outside of it. Eventually, Viṭṭhalanātha was able to gather together all of the major works of Vallabhācārya and many of his minor works.

Because of political unrest in A.D. 1563 Viṭṭhalanātha moved his family out of Adaila and settled it, for a time, in Mathurā. Then, in A.D. 1572, the Emperor Akbar, supposedly out of admiration for Viṭṭhalanātha's virtuous life, granted him a tract of land along the Yamunā across from Mathurā and he settled there with his family. This settlement of Viṭṭhalanātha and his family and many of his followers, which was on the site where Vallabhācārya had received his revelation of the *Brahma-sambandha*, was the beginning of the modern village of Gokula. This Gokula founded by Viṭṭhalanātha is about a mile from the ancient village of Gokula, now officially called Mahābana and unofficially Old Gokula, where Kṛṣṇa's foster father King Nanda is supposed to have ruled the cowherds. Akbar continued to favour Viṭṭhalanātha after the grant of the land for the village of Gokula, for more grants of land from Akbar or members of his family followed. Before Viṭṭhalanātha died in A.D. 1586, he had the leadership of the *Sampradāya* divided among his seven sons; at the same time, Shri Govardhananāthaji and the eight other primary divine *svarūpas* were distributed among the sons. Listed below are each of the sons, placed in order of birth from eldest to youngest,

¹Ibid., pp. 520–530.

with the *svarūpa* or *svarūpas* given to each and the present-day location of the *svarūpas* (the temple of each *svarūpa* is always the house of the eldest direct male descendant of the son of Viṭṭhalanātha to whom the *svarūpa* was given):¹

<i>Son</i>	<i>Svarūpa</i>	<i>Location</i>
Giridhara	Shrī Nāthajī	Nāthadvāra (Rājas.)
	Shrī Navanītapriyajī	Nāthadvāra (Rājas.)
	Shrī Mathureshajī	Jatipurā (Braj, UP)
Govindarāya	Shrī Viṭṭhalanānāthajī	Nāthadvāra (Rājas.)
Bālakṛṣṇa	Shrī Dvārakānāthajī	Kāṅkaroli (Rājas.)
Gokulanātha	Shrī Gokulanāthajī	Gokula (Braj, UP)
Raghunātha	Shrī Gokulacandramājī	Kāmabana (Rājas.)
Yadunātha	Shrī Bālakṛṣṇajī	Sūrata (Gujarāt)
Yadunātha	Shrī Mukundarāyajī	Vārāṇasī (UP)
<i>(There is a dispute between two claimants—each with his own svarūpa—for primacy among the descendants of Yadunātha.)</i>		
Ghanashyāma	Shrī Madanamohanajī	Kāmabana (Rājas.)
Tulasīdāsa	Shrī Gopīnāthajī	Derāgāzīkhāṇ <i>(Sindh, moved to India after creation of Pākistān: presently located in Brndāvana, UP)</i>
<i>(Tulasīdāsa, nicknamed "Lālaji", was an adopted son of Viṭṭhalanātha who spread the Puṣtimārga in the Punjāb and Sindh; the svarūpa in the possession of his descendant is not equal in status to the nine listed above.)</i>		

¹ MĪTALA, *Braj ke Dharmā* . . . pp. 276, 296–297, 525.

The *Shuddhādvaita*

IN THE COURSE of the preceding two chapters, much reference has been made to the teachings and doctrines of Vallabhācārya, but no attempt has yet been made to give more than a very broad description of them. It has been said only that these doctrines form a guide for those who intend to follow that particular approach to spiritual freedom through devotion to a Supreme Being that is called, in Indian terms, the *bhaktimārga*. According to the broad description that has been given, the purpose of these teachings is the purification of human *jīvas*, through the transformation of mental attitudes from the *laukika* to the *alaukika*, so that they may be acceptable to the divine (see pp. 9–14 above). Although the description of Vallabhācārya's doctrines has thus been left very broad and general, the origin of those teachings has been dealt with more fully. According to the traditions of the *Sampradāya* founded by Vallabhācārya, the teachings taught by Vallabhācārya were not the result of human reasoning, but were themselves divine. Vallabhācārya was the *Mukhāvatāra* of *Parabrahman* Shrī Kṛṣṇa (see p. 22 above); consequently, the teachings which came from Vallabhācārya were directly from Shrī Kṛṣṇa. As far as scriptural authority is concerned, Vallabhācārya's teachings were based on the *Bhāgavata Purāna*, the one scripture by which the meaning of all other holy scriptures may be known (see p. 8 above). No more description of the doctrines of Vallabhācārya was necessary while the topic of discussion was limited to the *Sampradāya* founded by Vallabhācārya; the primary concern of the level of Vallabhācārya's movement that is represented by his *Sampradāya* is, as has already been said, the physical (*ādhikautika*) level. On the physical level, concern is with actions and with outward behaviour. On that level is the act of physical self-dedication (*ātmanivedana*) which must be made by every person who enters the *Sampradāya*, and there are the precepts on association with members of other religious and philosophical sects, on marriage, on behaviour toward the divine *svarūpas*,

on the conduct of the *sevā* of those *svarūpas*, and on the importance of the ceremony of *darshana*; on that level also are the descriptions of the place of Vallabhācārya and his descendants in the formation of the relationship between the human and the divine and the traditional accounts found in the Braj Bhāṣā *vārtā* literature of the lives of the most important and spiritually adept *sevakas* of Vallabhācārya which are meant to inspire desire for *bhaktibhāva*.¹ In order to go beyond the *ādhibhautika* level of simple action that is the *Sampradāya* and inquire about the precise nature of the doctrines that are the motivating and vitalizing force behind the actions of the *Sampradāya*, it is necessary to approach the *Shuddhādvaita*, the *ādhyātmika* level (the *ādhyātmika* is to the *ādhibhautika* as the internal self is to the external body), which contains the doctrinal philosophy formulated by Vallabhācārya to prove the reality and truth of the worldview which he held to be essential for the deliverance (*uddhāra*) of the *jīva*.

THE PLACE OF THE SHUDDHADVAITA AMONG INDIAN PHILOSOPHICAL SYSTEMS

Ordinarily, when the *Shuddhādvaita* of Vallabhācārya is discussed, it is discussed as one of the philosophical systems within the *saddarshana* (the six schools of philosophy) that make up the *āstika* division (that division which accepts the *Veda* as the foundation of all truth, the division which is, from the Hindu standpoint, orthodox) of Indian thought. Within the *saddarshana* Vallabhācārya's *Shuddhādvaita* is classed with the systems belonging to the *Vedānta* school (the school which bases its thought on the *Upanishads*—which are the *Veda-anta* [*anta* = end] or end of the *Veda*); in the *Vedānta* school there are many different traditions, one of which is the *Vaiṣṇava* tradition according to which the Supreme Brahman (*Parabrahman*) is personal and has divine qualities and attributes and may be called either *Viṣṇu*, *Śrī Kṛṣṇa*, or *Rāma* (the name used depends upon which of the three is the centre for one's devotion) when in his complete form. These *Vaiṣṇava* philosophies in the *Vedānta* school all have in common a reliance on the *bhaktimārga* as the surest way to spiritual freedom for the human soul, or, as it is called in Indian thought, the *jīva*; the *bhaktimārga* is one of the three commonly accepted methods posited in Indian thought by which the

¹BHAI MANILAL C. PAREKH, *Sri Vallabhacharya: Life, Teachings and Movement* (Rajkot: Sri Bhagavata Dharma Mission, 1943), pp. 320–321.

²SURENDRANATH DASGUPTA, *A History of Indian Philosophy* (5 vols.; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1961), vol. I, p. 68.

The *Saddarshana* are: *Sāṅkhya*, *Yoga*, *Vedānta*, *Mīmāṃsā*, *Nyāya*, and *Vaishēṣika*.

jīva may be liberated (*mukta*). In following the *bhaktimārga* one must concentrate all of his thoughts and actions in a spirit of selfless devotion (*bhakti*) on a supreme god; the *jñānamārga* and the *karmamārga* (the former is followed by those who turn their attention upon the search for knowledge of the one reality, almost always impersonal, and then try to realize within themselves association with this reality and the latter is followed by those who feel that the performance of certain actions, sacrifices, or rites and the avoidance of others will bring the highest good), the other two of the three methods for spiritual freedom (*mokṣa*), are not followed in any of the great philosophies of the Vaiṣṇava tradition in the *Vedānta*. Vallabhācārya's *Shuddhādvaita* is classed as one of the Vaiṣṇava philosophies of the *Vedānta* school. The place of the *Shuddhādvaita* among these Vaiṣṇava *Vedānta* philosophies is by no means lowly; it is considered one of the major philosophies of the Vaiṣṇava tradition and is, therefore, important in the history of Indian philosophy. As the formulator of the *Shuddhādvaita* philosophy, Vallabhācārya is ranked along with Rāmānujācārya,¹ Madhvācārya,² Nimbārka,³ and the group of philosophers inspired by Kṛṣṇa Caitanya⁴ in the pantheon of Vaiṣṇava philosophy.

Although the primary interest in this study is in the *Shuddhādvaita* as a key element in the transmutation of the *jīva* from a state of impurity to a state of purity and not in the *Shuddhādvaita* as a philosophical system to be compared with other Indian philosophies, Vallabhācārya's thought must be related, if only briefly, to the thought of other major philosophers—and especially to that of those belonging to the *Vedānta* school—in order to put his philosophical doctrines into the proper perspective.

Vallabhācārya, like almost all philosophers within the Indian cultural tradition, accepts the doctrine of *karma* (action). *Karma* refers to the force by which every action, no matter how insignificant, breeds results and these results, in turn, cause further actions; it is because of the *karmic* requirement that every action must have results that living beings must undergo an unending series of births. Vallabhācārya also accepts the existence of the *jīva*. It is the *jīva* (living entity) that passes through the infinite series of births. In most Indian philosophical systems, including that of Valiabhācārya, the *jīva* is pure but seems to have become impure through ignorance. Finally, Vallabhācārya and most other Indian philosophers see an escape from this bondage to the *karma*-produced cycle of birth after birth. This escape is *mokṣa* (liberation);

¹R. G. BHANDARKAR, *Vaiṣṇavism, Shaivism, and Minor Religious Systems* (Vārāṇasi: Indological Book House, 1965), pp. 50–57.

²Ibid., pp. 57–62.

³Ibid., pp. 62–66.

⁴Ibid., pp. 82–86.

in the state of *mokṣa* the *jīva* is free from the cycle of birth and rebirth.¹

In addition to the above philosophical ideas, which are found in almost all systems of Indian thought, there are certain concepts which are common to all of the schools of the *Vedānta*. One of these is the doctrine that there is a supreme entity which is the cause of the universe; this entity is called *Brahman* (growth, expansion, swelling, that which expands)² and is omniscient and eternal and present everywhere. Another common concept is that of the *Veda* and especially the *Upanishads* (*Vedānta*) as the source of all true knowledge; the *Brahma-sūtras* (or, *Vedānta-sūtras*)—which are really a summarizing of the ideas presented in the *Upanishads*—and the *Bhagavad Gītā* are also accepted as authoritative scriptures. The philosophers of the *Vedānta* have written commentaries on these scriptures in order to demonstrate the truth of their particular doctrines. The philosophers of the *Vedānta* schools hold that human reason has a valid sphere of applicability but in lofty matters of the spirit—the nature of *Brahman*, the relationship of *Brahman* and the *jīva*, the nature of the *mokṣa*, etc.—the only authority is the revealed meaning of the sacred scriptures just listed. All of the *Vedānta* philosophers hold the *jñānamārga* and the *bhaktimārga* to be superior to the *karmamārga* (some of them consider the *jñānamarga* to be superior to the *bhaktimārga*, while others—among whom is Vallabhācārya—hold the opposite to be the case); for all *Vedānta* philosophers the rituals and restrictions of the *karmamārga* are effective for obtaining material rewards and must be observed and practised while one is in the initial stages of spiritual seeking, but are of no use in the matter of the quest for *mokṣa*.³ As a philosopher belonging to the *Vedānta*, Vallabhācārya would concur with all of the above statements.

The *Vedānta* school is itself divided into two main divisions: the followers of the doctrine of *advaita*, made up especially of the followers of the famous Shankarācārya who flourished some six-hundred years before the time of Vallabhācārya, which is called “*Māyāvāda*” in the literature of the Vallabhācārya *Sampradāya*, and the followers of the Vaiṣṇava philosophers. The fundamental difference between the two divisions is that the *advaita* or *Māyāvādi* philosophers follow the *jñānamārga* while the Vaiṣṇava philosophers follow variations of the *bhaktimārga*. Examples of the antipathy of these divisions for each other have already been discussed (see pp. 26–27 and 43–46 above). Other important points of difference between the two divisions were the *advaita* doctrines

¹DASGUPTA, vol. I, pp. 71–75.

²MONIER MONIER-WILLIAMS, *A Sanskrit-English Dictionary* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1960), pp. 737–738.

³V. S. GHATE, *Le Vedanta, Etude sur les Brahma-Sutras et Leurs Cinq Commentaires* (Paris: Editions Ernest Leroux, 1918), pp. xliii–xliv.

accepting *Māyā* as an independent force of illusion—which the Vaiṣṇavas denied on the grounds that there can be no power outside of *Brahman*, and the reliance on self-effort for liberation (which is an outcome of any *jñānamārgī* system of thought) while the Vaiṣṇavas argue that only the Supreme Being can liberate the *jīvas*.¹ The doctrinal differences among the Vaiṣṇava schools—with the important deep and clear-cut differences between the followers of Madhvācārya, who are dualists, and the followers of the other Vaiṣṇava philosophers, who are non-dualists—are subtle and often obscure and need not be entered into for the purposes of this study.

Before leaving this very short discussion of the *Shuddhādvaita* from the purely philosophical point of view, mention should be made of the place of the *Shuddhādvaita* in Karl Potter's convenient classification of Indian philosophical systems. According to this classification, there are two basic points of view on philosophical problems in Indian thought. One of these is the "path philosophy" by which term is meant that kind of philosophy which holds that final liberation (*mokṣa*), which is, as noted above, the ultimate goal in almost every Indian philosophical system, can be attained by scrupulously following a programme of internal and external discipline. The other is "speculative philosophy" by which term is designated those systems that are concerned with proving that final liberation is possible and can be attained. The first type of philosophy would consist largely of a regimen made up of steps of progression, each step leading—upon its mastery—automatically into the next until finally the goal is attained; the other type of philosophy would be concerned with the nature of the universe, of man and of liberation itself and would attempt to show, by means of an understanding of the true nature of the universe, man, and *mokṣa*, that *mokṣa* is possible for man in the universe. Within the speculative type of philosophy there is a further two-fold distinction made, this time between "progress philosophy" and "leap philosophy". Progress philosophy is that type of speculative philosophy which holds that there are definite causal relationships between complete freedom and those conditions that are necessary for that freedom; leap philosophy, on the other hand, denies that such causal relationships exist by which one may move from causes to effects to eventual liberation. For the leap philosopher there may indeed be chains or ladders leading part of the way to liberation, but no chain leads to liberation. For *mokṣa* the leap philosopher looks to some force or presence unrelated to any effort on the part of the seeker. Not all Indian philosophies are clearly one or the other of these divisions; many fall somewhere in between the divisions. Nevertheless, this classification

¹ *Ibid.*

seems to be an excellent way to characterize quickly and accurately any Indian philosophical system in relation to other Indian systems of thought.¹

Karl Potter's system of classification of philosophies furnishes an excellent point from which to begin a discussion of the *Shuddhādvaita*, a discussion that will be, as nearly as possible, from the point of view of an initiate within the Vallabhācārya *Sampradāya* who is attempting to mould his own concept of the universe to fit the ādhyātmika form of the *Shuddhādvaita*. Vallabhācārya's *Shuddhāvaita* is a speculative philosophy. It does not posit a programme of discipline, but rather seeks to convince *jīvas* seemingly hopelessly mired in the morass of the *Kali Yuga* that escape from that morass is possible. Among the speculative philosophies, the *Shuddhādvaita* would have to be classed with those that are leap philosophies since in the *Shuddhādvaita* the final liberation of the *jīva*—a liberation which Vallabhācārya calls *uddhāra*, [Shrī Kṛṣṇa's] lifting out [the *jīva* from ignorance]—is not attained through any systematized understanding of the nature of the causes of bondage and of liberation. The *uddhāra* of the *Shuddhādvaita* is reached—or, more accurately, is received—only through the grace of Shrī Kṛṣṇa and it is, from the *jīva*'s point of view, completely unpredictable and irrational; Shrī Kṛṣṇa may bestow *uddhāra* on one who knows nothing of the teachings of Vallabhācārya, on one who has never received the *Brahmasambandha* (see pp. 17–20 above), on one who is impure and irreligious. The *anugraha* (grace) by which Shrī Kṛṣṇa grants *uddhāra* cannot be forced; good works, constant *sevā* (see pp. 50–52 above), knowledge of the *Shuddhādvaita* are not meant to cause Shrī Kṛṣṇa to grant *uddhāra* and these things could not cause Shrī Kṛṣṇa to grant *uddhāra* for Shrī Kṛṣṇa is absolutely independent and cannot be caused to do anything. Nor can the performance of wrong action force Shrī Kṛṣṇa to withhold *uddhāra*. The grace by which *uddhāra* is bestowed is completely under the control of the *icchā* (will, desire) power (*shakti*) of Shrī Kṛṣṇa; it is by the desire of Shrī Kṛṣṇa and for no other reason that the grace that brings *uddhāra* comes upon a *jīva*.² To try to force *uddhāra* to be granted or to try to bring it by one's own efforts would be egoistic and egoism is at the root of the ignorance which binds the *jīva*. In order to avoid all thought of bringing *uddhāra* by their own actions, the *sevakas* who follow Vallabhācārya cultivate an intense humility, as absolute egolessness and visualize themselves as the most impure of beings.

¹KARL H. POTTER, *Presuppositions of India's Philosophies* (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1963), pp. 98–100, 249.

²CIMMANALĀ HARISHĀNKARAJĪ, *Puṣṭimārgopadeshikā*, trans. into Hindī by Shrīmādhava Sharmā (Vārāṇasī: Shrīmādhava Sharmā, 1941), p. 70.

In so doing, they also issue a sort of challenge to Bhagavān : if Bhagavān Shri Kṛṣṇa delivers *jīvas* only in accordance with his own *icchā* and not because of outward pressures, then how can He hesitate to deliver the worst of men without seeming to be kept from delivering such men by reason of the vileness of their sins—an external pressure—and not by reason of his own *icchā*? It is in this vein that Sūradāsa sings :

O Lord, maintain your reputation.

I am a great sinner, and have never done your work.

Strong illusion (*Māyā*), home wealth, women; to these I have utterly bound myself.

I see and hear and know (their nature), but I don't stop doing these things.

I've heard people say you have brought many across,

I want to board the boat, but I can't pay the boatman.

Take me across, O great king, Lord of Braj.

I am not saying anything new, O Lord; you are the friend of the poor.¹

One may, however, object that the full, *ādhidaivika* (that which is divine, that which transcends both the physical and the intellectual and also contains them) expression of Vallabhācārya's teachings—the *Puṣṭimārga*—is a *mārga*, a way or path, and that it is a progression from the *ādhibhautika* (*Sampradāya*) to the *ādhyātmika* (*Shuddhādvaita*) to the *ādhidaivika* (*Puṣṭimārga*) ; this would not be accepted, though, by the follower of Vallabhācārya since, according to Vallabhācārya's thought, *bhaktibhāva* itself is the result of the *anugraha* (grace) of Shri Kṛṣṇa and is not the result of the *jīva*'s own efforts. In other words, one enters the *Sampradāya* and receives the *Brahmasambandha* initiation (which does not ensure eventual *uddhāra*, but which removes the impurities [*doṣa*] that the *jīva* has acquired) not by his own effort, but by the *anugraha* of Bhagavān which is subject only to the divine *icchā* (will); one progresses along the *mārga* revealed by Vallabhācārya only by the will of Shri Kṛṣṇa and, similarly, one fails to progress along that *mārga* by the will of Shri Kṛṣṇa.^{2,3} Vallabhācārya sums up his attitudes on the will of Shri Kṛṣṇa in the first verse of his “*Viveka-Dhairyāshrayanirūpaṇam*” (the

¹S. M. PANDEY and N. H. ZIDE, *The Poems of Surdas* (Chicago : University of Chicago, unpublished, 1963), poem no. 7. The text of the above poem is also available, without English translation in : Sūradāsa, *Sūrasāgara*, ed. NANDADULĀRĪ VĀJAPEYĪ (2 vols.; Vārānasī: Nāgaripracārīni Sabhā, 1965), vol. I, p. 35.

²MRUDULA I. MARFATIA, *The Philosophy of Vallabhācārya* (Delhi : Munshiram Manoharlal, 1967), pp. 84–85.

³DASGUPTA, vol. IV, pp. 335, 367–368.

eighth book of the *Sodashagrantha*) which goes as follows :

One must always preserve in himself true understanding (*viveka*), spiritual fortitude (*dhairyā*), and also confident dependence [on Shri Kṛṣṇa] (*āshraya*).

Viveka is the realization that Shri Kṛṣṇa will do all things according to his own will (*nijecchātah*).¹

The problem of the actions of the *jīva*, and especially of the actions of the *jīva* done with *bhaktibhāva*, and their relationship to the divine will are discussed more thoroughly in the following chapter; for the present, the above discussion will be sufficient to demonstrate that the *Shuddhādvaita* of Vallabhācārya is, in Karl Potter's terms, a true leap philosophy; in the *Shuddhādvaita* there is no course of endeavour, there is no *sādhana*, (a *sādhana* is something that leads to some objective, it is the act of subduing or overcoming, an accomplishment, a means, or any agent by which something may be done; it is a method by the power of which something may be accomplished)² other than *sevā* (service of Shri Kṛṣṇa; for examples of *ādhibhautika sevā* (see pp. 46–52 above) and this *sevā* is both the *sādhana* and the *phala* (fruit, reward) of the *sādhana*.³ That is to say, one does not perform *sevā* for any reward but the performance of *sevā* itself.

The *Shuddhādvaita* is, however, speculative; it describes and explains the real nature of the universe so that the *jīva*, who has already been initiated into the *Sampradāya* and is already practising the three kinds of *sevā* of Shri Kṛṣṇa (the three kinds of *sevā* [see p. 51 above] are : *tanujā*—produced by the body, *vittajā*—produced by wealth, and *mānasika*—mental; the last of the three is the best and is the product of the performance of the first two)⁴ and is desirous of further revelation, can begin to incorporate within himself that true explanation of the nature of the universe in place of the mistaken notions that he had held previously.

FUNDAMENTAL DOCTRINES OF THE SHUDDHADVAITA

Vallabhācārya's basic doctrine is that there is only one existent entity: *Parabrahman* Shri Kṛṣṇa. This being, in whom all that exists is contained, has been called by many names; in the *Bhagavad Gītā*, for example, he

¹ SITĀRAMA CARURVEDI, *Mahāprabhu Shrīmadvallabhācārya aur Puṣṭimārga* (Vārāṇasī: Hindi-Sāhityā-Kuṭīra, 1967), p. 298. The English translation is mine.

² MONIER-WILLIAMS, p. 1201.

³ HARISHANKARAJI, preface, p. 10.

⁴ Ibid., p. 16.

is called “Puruṣottama”¹ and in the *smṛti* (what is remembered from human sages but is not directly from the divine; in the *smṛti* are, for example, the *Mahābhārata* and the *Rāmāyaṇa*) he is called “Paramātmā”, in the *Upanishads* he is called “Brahman”, and in the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* he is called “Bhagavān”. Brahmā, Viṣṇu, and Shiva are his limited *avatāras*.^{2,3} Since Vallabhācārya accepted only one existent he was a supporter of the *advaita* point of view (the point of view which holds that there is no [a-] duality [*dvaita*]); furthermore, Vallabhācārya was a *bhakta* with an intensity of devotion to his god that would allow no rival to that god. Vallabhācārya cannot even allow his own identity to rival that of his god. Such an attitude of uncompromising non-dualism is, of course, not unique to Vallabhācārya. The same spirit is found, for example, in the forty-first *sūtra* of the *Nārada Bhakti Sūtras* which goes as follows:

There is no feeling of difference in that [Supreme Being] and in the person [devoted to him].⁴

Vallabhācārya’s god had to receive complete devotion and, in order to receive complete devotion, that god had to be supreme without any second beside him. Rather than reasoning to this unity, it would seem from the tenor of Vallabhācārya’s writings that he began, like a true *bhakta*, from a supreme divine unity and then explained how the multiple universe developed from this supreme unity. The philosophical system of explanation which Vallabhācārya worked out was called by him *Shuddhādvaita*, that is, pure (*shuddha*) non-duality (*advaita*); *Shuddhādvaita* was meant to prove by scriptural exegesis that *Parabrahman* Shrī Kṛṣṇa had to be absolutely, purely one. Specifically, Vallabhācārya meant his *Shuddhādvaita* to convince those who followed his teachings that all devotion must be turned to Shrī Kṛṣṇa as the only power and existence. The *Shuddhādvaita* was also a counter to the *advaita* philosophical system of Shankārācārya and other members of his school. The *advaita* philosophers accounted for the origin of the physical universe by a force which they called “*Māyā*”; *Māyā* is, for Shankarācārya :

...indescribable and indefinable for it is neither real nor unreal nor

¹S. RADHAKRISHNAN, *The Bhagavadgītā* (London : George Allen and Unwin, 1960), p. 269. The verse referred to is XI : 3.

²VALLABHĀCĀRYA, *The Tattvārtha-Dīpa-Nibandha* with *Prakāsha* (*Shāstrārtha Prakāraṇa*), ed. HARISHANKAR ONKARI SHASTRI (2 vols.; Bombay : Trustees of Sheth Narayandas, 1943), I, Sanskrit text : p. 1 of Sanskrit section; English translation : p. 23, in English section. Reference is to verse 6.

³HARISHANKARAJĪ, pp. 8–9, 63.

⁴SWĀMĪ TYĀGĪSHĀNANDA, *Aphorisms on the Gospel of Divine Love or Nārada Bhakti Sūtras* (Mylapore, Madras : Sri Ramakrishna Math, 1955), p. 12. Reference is to verse 41.

*both... It is not real, for it has no existence apart from Brahman, it is not unreal, for it projects the world of appearance. It is not real, for it vanishes at the dawn of knowledge; it is not unreal, for it is true as long as it lasts. It is not real to constitute a limit to Brahman and yet it is real enough to give rise to the world of appearance. And it is not both real and unreal, for this conception is self-contradictory.*¹

Vallabhācārya found this sort of mysterious force completely unacceptable. Vallabhācārya could not admit any power outside of Brahman or inside of Brahman that is credited with the power to create something that is not Brahman. Shankarācārya's *Māyā*, even though it is said to have its only existence in Brahman, is able to project the world of appearances (= the *jagat*, the world of matter in which human beings and other creatures dwell) and the world of appearances is a world without substance (since all substance is Brahman, a world without substance would be a world without Brahman) that vanishes when true knowledge is gained (true knowledge being the knowledge that all is unchanged Brahman and that there is, in reality, no world). To Vallabhācārya all of this meant simply that Shankarācārya was positing a force, no matter how lacking in ultimate reality it might be, that had power to create what is separate from Brahman.

Besides placing a power with the ability to create in conjunction with Brahman, the *advaita* theory also presumed the physical world, the *jagat*, to be unreal. For Vallabhācārya, the *jagat* is real and is of the essence of Brahman; no outside illusive force is necessary to account for the *jagat*.

Vallabhācārya had described his concept of Brahman in his *Tattvārtha Dīpa Nibandha* in the following words :

Brahman is *sat*, *cit*, and *ānanda*, omnipresent, indestructible, omnipotent, self-dependent, omniscient and destitute of worldly qualities. verse 65²

Vallabhācārya here makes Brahman consist of *sat*, *cit*, and *ānanda*; by *sat* is meant simple existence, being neither conscious nor able to feel, by *cit* is meant awareness, understanding, consciousness, by *ānanda*, a word which refers to feelings of happiness, of delight, of joy, is meant the ability to take pleasure, to feel—without *ānanda* the divine play that is called *līlā* would be impossible. It is important to realize that Vallabhā-

¹CHANDRADHAR SHARMA, *A Critical Survey of Indian Philosophy* (London : Rider and Co., 1960), pp. 274-275.

²VALLABHĀCĀRYA, I, verse 65, Sanskrit text : p. 5 of Sanskrit section ; English translation : page 30 of English section.

cārya sees these three—*sat*, *cit*, and *ānanda*—as making up the actual entity of Brahman. They are not qualities of Brahman, they are Brahman; in the text of verse 65 translated above Vallabhācārya writes, “*saccidānandarūpam tu brahma*”, which means that Brahman is the very form of *sat*, *cit*, and *ānanda*, that Brahman is composed of *sat*, *cit*, and *ānanda*. Nor is this in any way a limitation of Brahman—who by definition cannot be limited—since the *ānanda* of Brahman (in discussing the *Shuddhādvaita*, Vallabhācārya’s example will be followed and Parabrahman will be called simply “Brahman” while the lower, limited manifestation of Brahman will be called “*akṣara Brahman*”) is infinite and limitless. Brahman is *sat*; when Brahman, by his own *icchā* and for his own pleasure, spins out his *lilā* (his play), he conceals part of himself in a process that Vallabhācārya calls “*tirobhāva*” (concealment, act of hiding, becoming invisible; the term does not mean destruction, but simply refers to a state in which something has become temporarily imperceptible but still exists)¹ and that *tirobhūta* (concealed) part of himself is no longer apparent.² One of the powers (*shaktis*) which Brahman possesses is called “*Māyā*” and it is by this *Māyāshakti*³ that Brahman conceals part of himself to become the *jagat*. The *jagat* or *prapañca* (Vallabhācārya seems to consider the two terms to be synonyms, even though ‘*prapañca*’ usually refers to the universe as an expansion or development of an ongoing process of evolution while *jagat* usually refers to the world of the living, of moving beings)⁴ is *jāda* (lifeless, inert matter) and *jāda* is the *sat* of Brahman in *āvirbhūta* (*āvirbhāva*—*āvirbhūta* mean “manifest”, “visible”, “apparent”, and are the opposite side of *tirobhāva*—*tirobhūta*) condition. The process by which all but the existence portion (*sat*) of Brahman is *tirobhūta* is accomplished by the *Māyāshakti* that is real and is part of Brahman. It is of primary importance to notice that the process of *āvirbhāva* is not creation and the process of *tirobhāva* is not destruction, for in the former case nothing has come into being and in the latter case nothing has ceased or been annihilated; furthermore, nothing has changed. There is no change in the processes of *āvirbhāva* and *tirobhāva*, there is only a process of manifestation of what has always been present though not apparent, on the one hand, and a process of concealment of what will always be present though not apparent, on the other hand. The *Māyāshakti*, like a magician’s mirrors, makes part of Brahman apparent (*āvirbhūta*) while the rest is concealed (*tirobhūta*); *Māyāshakti* is under the control of the *icchā* (will, desire) of Brahman. When only *jāda* is apparent then the *jagat*,

¹MONIER-WILLIAMS, p. 447.

²MARFATIA, pp. 48–49.

³Ibid., p. 41. See also : VALLABHĀCĀRYA, I, verse 23, Sanskrit text : p. 2 of Sanskrit section ; English translation on p. 25 of English section.

⁴MONIER-WILLIAMS, pp. 408, 681.

the physical world, is manifest and only the *sat* of Brahman is visible and the *cit* and *ānanda* are hidden. *Jagat* is thus the *sat* of Brahman and so is Brahman and is real; *jagat* is, of course, not the complete Brahman, but only Brahman partially manifested.

The process outlined above is complicated by the presence of an intermediary form between Brahman and *jagat*: the *akṣara* Brahman. *Akṣara* (imperishable) Brahman is the same as Brahman ("Brahman" refers to the supreme and complete Brahman, Shrī Kṛṣṇa Parabrahman), but with only part of the infinite *ānanda* *āvirbhūta* (manifest); therefore, Vallabhācārya calls *akṣara* Brahman the Brahman with limited or calculable *ānanda*.¹ *Akṣara* Brahman is the abode or foundation which Brahman manifests out of himself in order to spin out his *līla*; thus, it is actually out of *akṣara* Brahman that the *jagat* is manifested. The *jagat* is then spoken of as being the *kṣara*, since the *jagat* is *kṣara* (*kṣara* comes from a Sanskrit verbal root that means "to flow", "to melt away", "to wane"; *kṣara* thus means "perishable", "something that is likely to melt away")² and subject to change.

It is, indeed, by the *shakti* called *Māyā* that Brahman is partially manifested to form the *jagat*, but, just as the actual manifestation of Brahman is done through a limited form of Brahman called *akṣara* Brahman, so the actual place of *Māyā* in the actual evolution of *jaḍa* is filled by another *shakti* of Brahman called "*prakṛti*". *Prakṛti* is made up of the three *guṇas* (the qualities present in varying proportions in all matter), *sattva* (purity), *rajas* (passion, vigour), and *tamas* (dullness, darkness) and it is from *prakṛti* that the visible material world develops. *Prakṛti* proceeds from the *sat* of *akṣara* Brahman and from it develop the twenty-six *tattvas* or elements of the material world in the same order as in the *Sāṅkhya* system.^{3,4,5}

So far, the *jagat* has been accounted for by Vallabhācārya as a partial manifestation of Brahman brought about through the *Māyā* power of Brahman. The manifested portion of Brahman is the *sat*, the portion of unconscious, unaware being. This manifestation is brought about by *Māyā* acting as *prakṛti* to evolve out of the *sat* of the *akṣara* Brahman, which is Brahman with *sat* and *cit* manifested but with only a part of *ānanda* manifested. Nothing, meanwhile, has changed in Brahman; Brahman is eternal and beyond any change. By his *icchā* Brahman causes the *jagat* to be manifested through the medium of his *Māyā* out of himself.

¹HARISHANKARAJĪ, p. 63.

²MONIER-WILLIAMS, p. 327.

³MARFATIA, p. 32.

⁴DASGUPTA, IV, pp. 332-336.

⁵FRANKLIN EDGERTON, *The Bhagavad Gitā* (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1965), pp. 140-142.

In the words of Vallabhācārya's *Tattvārtha Dīpa Nibandha*:

It [=Brahman] is the material cause of the Universe, (*jagat*) and it is its efficient cause. Sometimes it indulges in self-sport and sometimes sports in the Universe. v. 68.¹

The phrase "sometimes it indulges in self-sport" refers to those periods when the universe is completely concealed (*tirobhūta*) and the phrase "sometimes [it] sports in the Universe" refers to the periods when Brahman manifests the universe out of himself. In verse 70 Vallabhācārya refers to Brahman as being the universe and yet being untouched by the universe:

Although present in all objects He is untouched by them all. Although He enters every object as its body and shines there, the object does not know him. He is not the object of any controversy. All controversial doctrines relate to Him. v. 70.²

In verse 72 Vallabhācārya discusses the powers of *āvirbhāva* and *tirobhāva*:

Assuming various forms by his two powers—*Āvirbhāva* (manifestation) and *Tirobhāva* (non-manifestation), He causes infatuation. He is invisible by the powers of senses but becomes visible by His own will. v. 72.³

The next problem that Vallabhācārya explains is that of the true nature of the *jīva*, the human soul. Just as the *jagat* is the manifestation of the *sat* of Brahman, so are the *jīvas* the manifestation of the *cit*—the consciousness, awafeness, thinking power—of Brahman. In the *jagat* the *sat* of Brahman is manifest (*āvirbhūta*) and the *cit* and the *ānanda* are *tirobhūta* (concealed); in the *jīva sat* and *cit* are *āvirbhūta*—the *jīvas*, therefore, are aware and they exist—but the *ānanda* of Brahman is *tirobhūta* and so the *jīvas* do not feel the divine joy of Brahman. The *jīvas*, like the *jagat*, are not created but are manifested by Brahman out of himself; they are, according to Vallabhācārya, parts or fragments of Brahman and they are to Brahman as sparks are to a fire. In other words, the *jīvas* are not different from Brahman (Vallabhācārya's philosophical system is *shuddha* [pure] *advaita* [non-dualism], in it there can be only one being—Brahman—and all other beings have to be but fragments of

¹VALLABHĀCĀRYA, I, p. 6 of Sanskrit section; p. 30 of English section.

²Ibid.

³Ibid.

that one) in quality, for they proceed out of him as sparks proceed out of a fire, but they are less than Brahman in quantity. Just as a spark is only a fraction of a fire, so the *jīva* is said by Vallabhācārya to be the size of an atom (*anu*) while Brahman is infinite and beyond measurement. Like the *jagat*, the *jīvas*, as parts of Brahman, are real. The following verses from the *Tattvārtha Dipa Nibandha* help to explain Vallabhācārya's concept of the *jīva*:

The souls are Its [Brahman's] parts. They are evolved purely on account of Its will [*icchā*] namely "I am one and may become many." v. 27.

In the beginning of creation [*sṛṣṭi*], innumerable formless human souls emerged, at Its will, like sparks from fire. Even the inanimate objects came out from *Sat*, which is Its part. v. 28.¹

In verse 28 the word *sṛṣti* is translated as "creation"; *sṛṣti* has a meaning that is actually indicative of an "emission", "a letting go of one thing by another", "a casting forth of something from some other thing", "a production of one thing out of another thing" rather than of a "creation" which has the connotation of a new formation of something out of nothing or out of material different from the creator.² The meaning of the first phrase of the first line of verse 28 would more accurately be: "In the beginning of the manifestation of the physical world [by Brahman out of himself (I translate the pronoun for Brahman as "he-him" rather than as "it" because, though "Brahman" is grammatically neuter, for Vallabhācārya the supreme Brahman is Shri Krṣṇa and is masculine)]."

There are, in Parabrahman Shri Krṣṇa six important non-material *dharma*s (virtuous qualities, virtues)—for Parabrahman Shri Krṣṇa is, for Vallabhācārya, *saguṇa* (possessed of qualities), but *saguṇa* in the sense only of having qualities that are not made up of the three material *guṇas* (see p. 67 above). It is the limited manifestation of Parabrahman that is called *akṣara* Brahman that is devoid of qualities material or non-material and is called "nirguna" (qualityless). The six *dharma*s of Brahman are: *aishvarya* (majesty), *vīrya* (strength), *yasha* (fame), *shri* (fortune), *jñāna* (knowledge), and *vairāgya* (freedom from attachment).³ Originally, before the manifestation of the *jīvas* from Brahman, the *jīvas* also enjoyed the six non-material *dharma*s of Brahman. But, when in the course of the *līlā* performed by Parabrahman Shri Krṣṇa because of his own *icchā*,

¹Ibid., I, p. 3 of Sanskrit section; p. 26 of English section.

²MONIER-WILLIAMS, p. 1245.

³MALIK MOHAMMAD, Ālavār Bhakton kā Tamil-Prabandham aur Hindi Krṣṇa-Kāvya (Agrā: Vinoda Pustaka Mandira, 1964), p. 80.

Brahman concealed his *ānanda* and so manifested the *jīvas*, the six non-material *dharma*s were also made non-manifest in the *jīvas* and the *jīvas* became subject to misery. The *jīvas* then, by the *icchā* of Brahman, are filled with *avidyā* (non-knowing, ignorance) which is a form of the *Māyāshakti* of Brahman and, thus, is also a *shakti* of Brahman. Vallabhācārya explains the source and effect of *avidyā* in verse 31 of the *Tattvārtha Dīpa Nibandha*:

Knowledge [*vidyā*] and nescience [*avidyā*] are the powers [*shakti*] of God [*Hari*] created by *Māyā* only. They belong to the soul [*jīva*] and to none else. Hence the soul experiences misery and dependence.¹

It is this *avidyā* that brings about the misery of the *jīva* because, by the action of *avidyā*, the *jīva* forgets its nature as a part of Brahman and lives in a painful world of suffering. Since the *jīvas* are ignorant of their existence as parts of Brahman, non-different from him in quality, they are also ignorant of the *svadharma* (specific duty, innate obligation) of the *jīva*, which is the natural duty of any part to its whole : *sevā* (service). Because the *jīvas* do not serve the whole of which they form a part, they each imagine that they are unique and independent and able to perform actions by self-will and able to take possession of other things; this is the state of egoism which is the opposite of *sevā-bhakti* and which is the root of the *doṣa* (impurities) that separate the *jīvas* from Brahman who is pure (*shuddha*). The whole existence which is formed by the *avidyā* (ignorance) that belongs to the *jīva* is called *samsāra*—the going or wandering through an endless cycle of births—and is absolutely unreal. This *samsāra* that Vallabhācārya holds to be unreal is not a physical state or material plane; it is a mental attitude that is false but is held by the *jīvas* to be true, it is the ignorant interpretation of the nature of reality that is held by the *jīvas*. *Samsāra* is the product of the ignorance of the *jīva*—or, rather, it is the product of the imagination of the *jīva* under the influence of *avidyā*. As such, the *samsāra* is not a manifestation of Brahman; since it is not a manifestation of Brahman, it cannot be real. Since the *samsāra* is not real, it can be destroyed. The process of *uddhāra* is the lifting of the *jīva* out of *samsāra*; that is, *uddhāra* is the destruction of *samsāra* for a particular *jīva*. *Uddhāra* is the result only of the grace of Shrī Kṛṣṇa and the grace (*anugraha*) of Shrī Kṛṣṇa is subject to the *icchā* of Shrī Kṛṣṇa. It is only by the *icchā* of Shrī Kṛṣṇa that a *jīva* may be released from *samsāra*, since it is by the *icchā* of Shrī Kṛṣṇa for the performance of *lilā* that the *jīvas* fall under the influence of *avidyā*. According to Vallabhācārya, a *jīva* cannot liberate itself. Some *jīvas*, through the disciplines of the

¹VALLABHĀCĀRYA, I, p. 3 of Sanskrit section; p. 26 of English section.

jñānamārga, imagine that they liberate themselves when they are merged into the *akṣara* Brahman (which is reached by *jñāna* while the supreme Brahman is reached by *bhakti*), but this liberation (*mokṣa*) is also done only by the *icchā* of Shri Kṛṣṇa Parabrahman.

Since the problem of *samsāra* is a problem of wrong understanding and wrong mental outlook and not of physical origin—since the *jagat* on which the *jīva* projects *samsāra* is real, the solution to the problem is the reestablishment within the *jīva* of right understanding (*viveka*, p. 63 above). It was for the reestablishment of this *viveka* that Shri Kṛṣṇa manifested his *Mukhāvatāra* Vallabhācārya on earth. It is for the establishment of *viveka* in place of ignorance that Vallabhācārya taught the method (*sādhana*, which is *sevā*) by which the attitude of the *jīva* is transformed from the *laukika* to the *alaukika*; the *laukika* is ignorance and the *alaukika* is *viveka*—right understanding of the nature of existence. *Viveka* can replace ignorance, of course, only by the *anugraha* (grace) of Shri Kṛṣṇa.

All the *jīvas*—and the *jīvas* are many, not one, in Vallabhācārya's thought—are equal since all are equally part of Brahman; however, in order to perform the divine *līlā*, that play that is beyond human comprehension, Shri Kṛṣṇa manifests some *jīvas* with potential different from the potential of other *jīvas*. The *jīvas* fall, according to Vallabhācārya's scheme of things, into three categories. These categories are explained in one of the books included in the *Śoḍashagrantha*, the *Puṣṭipravāhamaryādābhedaḥ*. The description of these categories and their significance given below is taken from the *Puṣṭipravāhamaryādābhedaḥ*.

Vallabhācārya explains that there are three kinds of *jīva* that have been manifested by Brahman: one is the *pusti* (well-nourished, complete, of the nature of the *anugraha* [grace] of Shri Kṛṣṇa), the second is the *maryādā* (those within the limits of the actions required and forbidden by the *Veda*), and the third is the *pravāha* (those in the stream or current [*pravāha*] of continuous action). Each type of *jīva* follows the course of life named after its particular type: the *pravāha jīvas* follow the *pravāhamārga*, the *maryādā jīvas* follow the *maryādāmārga*, and the *pusti jīvas* follow the *pustimārga* (the *mārga* taught by Vallabhācārya). The *pusti jīvas* and the *maryādā jīvas* are together called by Vallabhācārya “*daiva jīvas*” (divine souls, souls that have the potential for *uddhāra*). It was for the *uddhāra* of these *daiva jīvas* (called *daivī jīvas* in Braj Bhāṣā) that Vallabhācārya and his son Viṭṭhalanātha, according to the *Caurāśi Vaiṣṇavan ki Vārtā*, appeared on earth.¹ The *pravāha jīvas* are demonic and have little potential for *uddhāra*; there are two kinds of demonic

¹HARIRĀYAJĪ, *Caurāśi Vaiṣṇavan ki Vārtā* [Tin Janma ki Līlā Bhāvanāvālī] ed. DvĀRAKA-DĀSA PARĪKHA (Mathurā : Dvārakadāsa Parīkha, 1961), p. 1.

jīvas: those that are knowingly evil and those that are unknowingly evil.¹ Vallabhācārya proved the reality of his *pravāha* class of *jīvas*, in the third verse of the *Puṣṭipravāhamaryādābhedaḥ*, by referring to the following verse from the *Bhagavad Gītā* (XVI: 6):

There are two types of beings created in the world—the divine [daiva] and the demoniac [āsura]. . . .²

In verse 24 of the *Puṣṭipravāhamaryādābhedaḥ* Vallabhācārya defines the *pravāha jīvas* by reference to *Bhagavad Gītā* XVI: 7:

The demoniac do not know about the way of action or the way of renunciation. Neither purity, nor good conduct, nor truth is found in them.³

The existence of the *maryādā* type of *jīva* is proven, Vallabhācārya holds in verse three of the *Puṣṭipravāhamaryādābhedaḥ*, by the existence of the *Veda* and the body of social and ritual restrictions that surrounds it; these Vedic laws and restrictions are of prime importance to *maryādā jīvas*.⁴

Since Vallabhācārya's doctrines are meant as a guide to the *Puṣṭimārga*, his interest is mainly in the '*puṣṭi jīvas*'. The *Puṣṭimārga* itself will not be discussed in detail here, since it is the subject of the next chapter; the *puṣṭi jīvas*, however, should be at least briefly described here. Vallabhācārya proves the existence of *puṣṭi jīvas* and of the *puṣṭimārga*, again, by verses in the *Bhagavad Gītā*. In the fourth verse of his *Puṣṭipravāhamaryādābhedaḥ*, Vallabhācārya refers to a refrain found in *Bhagavad Gītā* XII: 14–20—“he, my devotee [bhakta], is dear to me”⁵—and interprets it to mean that there are *puṣṭi jīvas* and they are the best of all *jīvas*. Vallabhācārya's interpretation of the refrain is based upon his assumption that all *bhaktas* are *puṣṭi jīvas* and that the *bhaktimārga* is the *Puṣṭimārga*. Since Vallabhācārya gave the highest place among the three kinds of *jīvas* to the *puṣṭi jīvas*, he had to give the *puṣṭi jīvas* a point of manifestation equal to their high status. This he did by teaching that the *puṣṭi jīvas* were manifested from the body (*kāya*) of Shrī Kṛṣṇa, while the *maryādā jīvas* were manifested by the speech of Shrī Kṛṣṇa, and the *pravāha jīvas* were produced from the mind of Shrī Kṛṣṇa.⁶ There is a great deal of

¹See *Puṣṭipravāhamaryādābhedaḥ*, verse 24, found in: CĀTURVEDĪ, p. 291.

²RADHAKRISHNAN, p. 336.

³Ibid.

⁴CĀTURVEDĪ, pp. 285–291.

⁵See *Bhagavad Gītā* XII: 14–20, found in RADHAKRISHNAN, pp. 297–299.

⁶See *Puṣṭipravāhamaryādābhedaḥ*, verse 9, found in CĀTURVEDĪ, pp. 287–288.

significance in the origin of the *puṣṭi jīvas* from the body of Shrī Kṛṣṇa. The body of Shrī Kṛṣṇa is not made of ordinary, destructible material, but is made of the *ānanda* portion of his being and is, therefore, of the essence of eternal delight. For true *bhaktas* the body of Shrī Kṛṣṇa is far superior to any other objective; those who are part of the *pravāhā-mārga* crave riches and sensual pleasures on earth, those who follow the *maryādāmārga* live in expectation of the rewards that the *Veda* promises in heaven or else find austere union with *akṣara* Brahman, but those who follow the *puṣṭimārga* are satisfied only with direct experience of the divine body of Shrī Kṛṣṇa. The precedent was set by the *gopis* (cowherd girls) who enjoyed physical love-play with Shrī Kṛṣṇa during his life in Braj on earth and who enjoy eternally the love of Shrī Kṛṣṇa in the endless *lilā* in Goloka. The *gopis* are accepted in Vallabhācārya's *Sampradāya* as the perfect *bhaktas*; they are the *gurus* of *Puṣṭimārga* and they demonstrate the complete, love-saturated devotion that is the ideal pattern for relations between the *jīvas* and the divine.¹ They teach, through their own example, that the physical presence of Shrī Kṛṣṇa is to be desired above all else. The attachment of the *gopis* to the physical splendour of Shrī Kṛṣṇa and their refusal to accept any substitute for the actual presence of Shrī Kṛṣṇa have been most vividly portrayed in Sūradāsa's series of *padas* describing the attempts of Kṛṣṇa's messenger Uddhava to persuade the *gopis* to give up their longing for Kṛṣṇa and practise meditation on the abstract, qualityless absolute being. In fact, Uddhava wanted the *gopis* to give up their *viraha* (the agony of separation which is one of the hallmarks of *bhakti*) and their love for the physical presence of Shrī Kṛṣṇa—to do either would be to give up the *bhaktimārga*—and to dedicate themselves to meditation on *akṣara* Brahman—i.e., to take up the practice of the *jñānamārga*. But the *gopis* were—and are—*bhaktas*, *puṣṭi jīvas*; their way is the *Puṣṭimārga*, they are of the divine body. Therefore, they answered Uddhava in the following *pada*:

Uddhava, we are not deserving of Yoga.

How can a weak woman know the essence of knowledge—how can she meditate?

You tell us to close those eyes where the image of Hari [= Shrī Kṛṣṇa] lives.

Oh Bee [= Uddhava], such deceitful words we will not listen to.

Who wants to suffer, having his ears pierced and letting his hair grow long and matted?

¹HARISHANKARAJI, p. 119.

You tell us to give up sandalwood paste and smear ashes on our bodies, we who have been badly burned by fire of separation from him.

He for whom a Yogi wanders around until he forgets himself, is within our hearts.

Sūradāsa says: The milkmaids say, "We are not away from him even for an instant, like a body and its shadow."¹

In the above poem Sūradāsa expresses beautifully two key concepts of *bhakti* thought in general and of Vallabhācārya's thought in particular. The first of these concepts is that of the delightful, transcendent—*alaukika*—body of Shrī Kṛṣṇa as being both the supreme, final goal and the original source (for in Vallabhācārya's thought there is no bondage and no liberation, only entanglement in and deliverance [*uddhāra*] from the *jīva*'s ignorance and self-deception that is *samsāra*; in reality, the *jīva*, as a part of the Parabrahman, is always in its original, divine state) of the *pūṣṭijīva*; the second is that of the undesirability of ascetic renunciation (*yoga*) in the pursuit of liberation through knowledge. These two concepts are inseparably intertwined in *bhakti* thought and are presented so intertwined in Sūradāsa's poem. The *yogī* closes his eyes to search within himself for realization of absolute truth; in so doing, he obscures and hides with his own ego the form of Shrī Kṛṣṇa. Yoga is self-centred, self-reliant, and self-inflating; for these reasons Sūradāsa and the other followers of Vallabhācārya held yoga to be self-defeating, for it hinders the seeing and serving of Shrī Kṛṣṇa which is complete and final truth. By "weak woman" Sūradāsa means any follower of the *Puṣṭimārga*; such a follower is "weak" because he knows that he is not independent and that he does not accomplish his goals through his own strength, but that he must rely completely on the grace of Shrī Kṛṣṇa. He is a woman because it is in womanly devotion—whether like that of the *gopīs* for the young Kṛṣṇa or like that of Yashodā for the child Kṛṣṇa—that such a follower finds the ideal for his total self-surrender to Shrī Kṛṣṇa. A follower of the *Puṣṭimārga* (who would, of course, have to be a *pūṣṭijīva*) who is such a "weak woman" cannot practise yoga for he is incapable of the self-centred efforts required in that discipline and he does not find the impersonal, qualityless, formless absolute being that is the goal of *yogic* discipline attractive; instead, he wants to experience the ecstatic joy (*bhāva*) of loving service of the delightful Kṛṣṇa who has a radiant, indestructible body made of *ānanda* (*alaukika* bliss). Furthermore, a *yogī* puts on external marks of his efforts—matted hair, pierced ears, and ashes on his body—while the follower of the *Puṣṭimārga*, like the

¹ PANDEY and ZIDE, poem 95. For Braj Bhāṣā text, see : Sūradāsa, II, pp. 1430–1431.

gopīs, has actually suffered the burning of *viraha* and shows internal as well as external evidence of it in his devotion to Shri Kṛṣṇa. That burning *viraha* is his *tapas* (ascetic penance) and it causes his mind to abandon every thought but the thought of Kṛṣṇa, which is his *vairāgya* (renunciation). As Vallabhācārya has written in the seventh verse of his “*Sannyāsanirṇayah*” (quoted above on p. 34):

The *sannyāsa* taken for the purpose of experiencing *viraha* is best.... Finally, the follower of the *Puṣṭimārga*, the *puṣṭi jīva*, does not want the absorption into *akṣara Brahman* that is the end of the practice of *yoga* in the *jñānamārga*; he wants, instead, to have continual association with the divine body of Shri Kṛṣṇa. He wants to be, in the words of Sūradāsa’s *gopīs*, “not away from him even for an instant, like a body and its shadow.” For Vallabhācārya’s followers, the culmination of delight in the physical presence of Shri Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Being and the source of all existence, is the highest experience (*anubhava*) of *sevā*, which is called “*alaukika sāmarthyā*” (*alaukika* capability). This *alaukika* capability, given by the divine *anugraha* (grace) is the capability by which a *bhakta* is able to experience Shri Kṛṣṇa and Shri Kṛṣṇa’s *līlā* within himself. By means of the *alaukika* capability, the *bhakta* shares in the essence of Bhagavān Shri Kṛṣṇa and consciously and physically enters with him into the eternal *līlā*.^{1,2}

The *puṣṭi jīvas*, however, are not all the same. For purposes of spinning out his *līlā*, Bhagavān Shri Kṛṣṇa manifested two different groups of *puṣṭi jīvas*. The first group is made up of pure (*shuddha*) *puṣṭi jīvas*; these pure *puṣṭi jīvas* were manifested before the six divine virtues (*dharma*s) were concealed in the *jīvas* (see p. 69 above) and so are naturally able to practise perfect devotion to Shri Kṛṣṇa. The other group is called the group of mixed (*mishra*) *jīvas* and is made up of three different kinds of *puṣṭi jīvas*: those in which *puṣṭi* is mixed with *puṣṭi*, those in which *puṣṭi* is mixed with *maryādā*, and those in which *puṣṭi* is mixed with *pravāha*.³ The *jīvas* in whom *puṣṭi* is mixed with *puṣṭi* know everything (i.e., their knowledge is potentially unlimited), the *jīvas* in whom *puṣṭi* is mixed with *maryādā* know the *guṇas* of Bhagavān Shri Kṛṣṇa (i.e., their knowledge extends to the limits of the material universe) and the *jīvas* in whom *puṣṭi* is mingled with *pravāha* maintain an interest in the affairs and concerns of *samsāra*.⁴

By the above system of classification of human *jīvas*, Vallabhācārya explained the different spiritual aptitudes found among human beings. Although all of these aptitudes were determined by Bhagavān Shri Kṛṣṇa

¹HARISHANKARAJI, pp. 146–147.

²PAREKH, p. 245.

³MARFATIA, p. 26.

⁴See *Puṣṭipravāhamaryādābhedah* verses 15–16, found in: CĀTURVEDĪ, p. 289.

for his *lilā* and although some of these aptitudes made some classes of *jivas* likely to pass eternity in the delusion of *samsāra* while others made other classes of *jivas* very likely to find release, the *anugraha* of Bhagavān always provided the chance that *uddhāra* would be granted even to the lowest of the *jivas*, the *pravāha jivas* who were knowingly evil. By means of the *anugraha* of Bhagavān (and of the *icchā* which rules it), the order of the universe conceived by Vallabhācārya was saved from being completely predestined and, for the majority of beings in it, hopeless.

There remains still one more very important entity within the model of the universe constructed by Vallabhācārya in his *Shuddhādvaita*: the *antaryāmin*. The word *antaryāmin* means, literally, “the inside (*antar* = inside, within) controller (*yam* = to support, to control)”; the *antaryāmin*, then, is an inner force which controls the *jīva*. According to Vallabhācārya, when Shri Kṛṣṇa manifested the *jīvas* out of himself in the course of his *lilā*, he concealed in them his *ānanda* but left his *sat* and *cit* manifest; but, since the *jīvas* are manifested for the divine *lilā*, Shri Kṛṣṇa had to exist within each of them in order to delight in that *lilā*. Shri Kṛṣṇa within the *jīva* is called “*antaryāmin*”. The *antaryāmin* is not affected by the actions of the *jīva*, nor does it suffer the delusions of *samsāra*; in the *antaryāmin* the *ānanda* of Shri Kṛṣṇa Parabrahman is manifest. In his *Tattvārtha Dīpa Nibandha* (verses 29–30 of the “*Śāstrārtha*” section), Vallabhācārya describes the *antaryāmin* in the following words :

All the forms of *Antaryāmin* have emerged from the Bliss [*ānanda*] constituent of God. *Antaryāmin* has all the *Sat*, (existence) *Chit* (knowledge), and *Ānanda* (bliss); the human souls have *Sat* and *Chit* and the matter (Universe) only *Sat*.

Hence due to latency of *Ānanda*, the soul and the Universe are deemed formless (joyless) . . . ; for the purpose of convenience, it is called Universe, soul and *Antaryāmin*.

In verse 39 of the same section, Vallabhācārya describes the place of the *antaryāmin* in the divine *lilā*:

Sometimes having created [*srstvā*] the creation [*jagat*] in the form of the sky, etc., and entered it by His two forms, God [Hari] sports in it as souls and *Antaryāmin*. . . .²

In general, Vallabhācārya views the *antaryāmin* as being the *akṣara Brah-*

¹VALLABHĀCĀRYA, I, p. 3 of Sanskrit section; p. 26 of English section.

²Ibid., I, p. 4 of Sanskrit section; p. 27 of English section.

man as it is manifested within the *jīvas*, while *akṣara* Brahman may be thought of as including both inanimate matter and the *jīvas* and as being the substratum of Parabrahman.¹ Sometimes, however, Vallabhācārya seems to see a more clear-cut distinction between the *antaryāmin* and the *akṣara* Brahman.²

In summary, the universe, as seen through the *Shuddhādvaita* of Vallabhācārya, appears as a strictly unitarian structure which reveals itself at three levels; this threefold revelation is then repeated in several different modes of existence, each one being a partial manifestation of the original unit. The basic revelation is expressed by the triad *ādhibhautika-ādhyātmika-ādhidaivika* (see pp. 62–63 above). This triad telescopes into the unity that is the one existence: Bhagavān Shri Kṛṣṇa Parabrahman. Shri Kṛṣṇa is the *ādhidaivika* revelation and is the complete revelation; the *ādhyātmika* revelation is only a partial manifestation of the *ādhidaivika* for in it part of the *ānanda* of the *ādhidaivika* is hidden; the *ādhibhautika* is the least of the three revelations, for in it only the *sat* of the *ādhidaivika* is manifested and the *cit* and *ānanda* are both concealed. These are the three primary levels at which Shri Kṛṣṇa reveals himself; anyone who intends to follow the *puṣṭimārga* of Vallabhācārya must understand this threefold revelation and must be able to distinguish each level of revelation from the others. Only in being able to make this distinction can the *jīva* recognize and serve the divine.

This model of a universe consisting of a triple revelation was not original to Vallabhācārya's thought. It appears all through the course of Indian philosophical development, most obviously in the three attributes of Brahman: *sat*, *cit*, and *ānanda*, in the three Aryan *varṇas*, in the three original Vedas, in the three *guṇas* of matter, and in the three universal gods: Brahmā, Viṣṇu, and Shiva. The use of the terms *ādhibhautika*, *ādhyātmika*, and *ādhidaivika* to describe the threefold revelation is also not an innovation made by Vallabhācārya. It appears, in fact, at *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*, II : 10 : 6–18;³ its appearance there was of special significance for Vallabhācārya since he accepted the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* as the scripture with final authority.

Each level of the triple revelation of Parabrahman had its own name. Vallabhācārya considers the *ādhibhautika* revelation to be the manifesta-

¹VALLABHĀCĀRYA. *The Tattvārtha-Dipa-Nibandha with Prakāsha (Sarvanirṇaya Prakarana)*, ed. HARISHANKAR ONKARJI SHASTRI (2 vols.; Bombay : Trustees of Sheth Narayandas, 1943), II, verses 103–105, p. 8 (Sanskrit section); p. 18 (English section).

²Ibid., II, verse 121, p. 9 (Sanskrit section); verse 123, p. 21 (English section).

³*Bhāgavata Purāṇa*, II : 10 : 6–18. Sanskrit text : Vyāsa, *Shrimadbhāgavata-Mahāpurāṇa* (2 vols.; Gorakhpura: Gītā Press, 1965), vol. I, pp. 191–192. English translation: *The Srimad-Bhagavatam*, trans. J. M. SANYAL (Calcutta: Oriental Publishing Co., 1952; 5 vols.), vol. I, pp. 129–130.

tion of the existence (*sat*) of Shrī Kṛṣṇa and he calls it *jada* (matter) or *jagat* (the physical world). The *ādhyātmika* revelation is the manifestation of the *cit* (consciousness) of Shrī Kṛṣṇa and of part of his *ānanda* (joy); this revelation is called “*antaryāmin*” when seen as the self within all beings and *akṣara* Brahman when seen as the source of the universe and the foundation on which it rests. The *ādhidaivika* is the full revelation of Shrī Kṛṣṇa. Those triads that are subsidiary to this basic triple revelation begin with the manifestation of the *jagat* through functions of the *akṣara* Brahman (the *ādhyātmika* revelation of Shrī Kṛṣṇa) : *Kāla* (time), *Karma* (the law of the inevitability of the results of action), and *Svabhāva* (the force of the will [*icchā*] of Shrī Kṛṣṇa that causes change to take place in the world); it is by these three functions that the *jagat* takes form and continues to exist. Without the grace of Shrī Kṛṣṇa, no *jīva* can pass beyond *Kāla*, *Karma*, and *Svabhāva*.¹ *Kāla*, as the chief of the three, is itself divided into a triad : the *ādhidaivika* revelation of *Kāla* is *akṣara* Brahman, the *ādhyātmika* is the divisions of time from the four *yugas* to the divisions of the day, and the *ādhībhautika* revelation of *Kāla* is the sun.² The force which causes the manifestation of the *ādhyātmika* and *ādhībhautika* levels of Shrī Kṛṣṇa Parabrahman and which causes the manifestation of those two levels to continue is a power (*shakti*) of Shrī Kṛṣṇa called *Māyā*. *Māyā* is also revealed on three levels : at the *ādhidaivika* level it is the *shakti* of Shrī Kṛṣṇa called *Māyā*, at the *ādhyātmika* level it is the *shakti* of Shrī Kṛṣṇa that is called *Prakṛti*, and at the *ādhībhautika* level it is the *shakti* of Shrī Kṛṣṇa that operates through the *jīvas* and is called *Avidyā*.

Among the *jīvas*, there are also triads of revelation. There are *pravāha jīvas* at the *ādhībhautika* level, *maryādā jīvas* at the *ādhyātmika* level, and *puṣṭi jīvas* at the *ādhidaivika* level. Within the *puṣṭi* class of *jīvas* there are three kinds of mixed *puṣṭi jīvas* : *puṣṭi-puṣṭi*, *maryādā-puṣṭi*, and *pravāha-puṣṭi*. Each of the three primary classes of *jīvas* has a particular goal toward which the *jīvas* within it tend to move : the *pravāha jīvas* tend towards the physical world, the *maryādā jīvas* tend towards the *akṣara* Brahman, and the *puṣṭi jīvas* tend toward Shrī Kṛṣṇa. There are three *mārgas* (ways, roads, courses) which the *jīvas* may follow : the *karmamārga* is the *ādhībhautika mārga* and brings material rewards, the *jñānamārga* is the *ādhyātmika mārga* and brings absorption in *akṣara* Brahman, the *bhaktimārga* is the *ādhidaivika mārga* and brings eternal physical association with Shrī Kṛṣṇa in the endless *līlā* performed in the non-material Braj called “Goloka”. During life on earth there are

¹VALLABHĀCĀRYA, II, verses 106–115, pp. 8–9 (Sanskrit section); pp. 18–20 (English section).

²Ibid., verses 109–112, pp. 8–9 (Sanskrit section); verses 110–114, p. 19 (English section).

also three stages: the *ādhibhautika* life is ordinary life before initiation into Vallabhācārya's *Sampradāya*, the *ādhyātmika* life is life within the *Sampradāya*, and *ādhidaivika* life is life passed in perfect practice of the *Puṣṭimārga* followed by entrance into the divine *līlā*. Within the *Sampradāya* itself, there are also three stages with the *Sampradāya* being the *ādhibhautika* stage, the *Shuddhādvaita* being the *ādhyātmika* level, and the *Puṣṭimārga* being the *ādhidaivika* level.

By visualizing the universe in accordance with the basic and subsidiary triads taught by Vallabhācārya in his *Shudhādvaita*, a seeker for spiritual truth would be able to see why Shri Kṛṣṇa is the only entity, why each *jīva* is only a part of Shri Kṛṣṇa, and why the only completely natural and satisfactory course open to the *jīvā* is the *Puṣṭimārga*. By the triad system of the *Shuddhādvaita*, every aspect of existence from the material world to the final paradise (paradise—not the *svarga* of Indra and the lower gods which is only a part of the *jagat*)—is itself divided into three levels: Vaikuṇṭha, the heaven of Shri Kṛṣṇa's manifestation as the god Viṣṇu, is the *ādhibhautika* level, Vyāpi-Viakuṇṭha is the *ādhyātmika* level, and Goloka, the complete revelation of Shri Kṛṣṇa's heaven, is the *ādhidaivika* level) is explained.

In the course of the manifestation of the *jagat*, Shri Kṛṣṇa appears for the sake of his *līlā* and for the aid of those *jīvas* who are devoted to him, as a number of *avatāras* in animal, human, and divine bodies; none of these *avatāras* are complete. Only once, according to Vallabhācārya, did Shri Kṛṣṇa appear on earth in his true form; that appearance was when he played his *līlā* in Braj as described in the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*. Throughout all of his manifestations Shri Kṛṣṇa remains unchanged and unaffected by those manifestations. In fact, no change actually takes place; all change in the universe is only, according to Vallabhācārya's *Shuddhādvaita*, apparent. The never-ceasing play of manifestation and concealment across the entity of Shri Kṛṣṇa causes the illusion of change. Everything is changeless Parabrahman revealed in an infinite number of ways and in countless different degrees.¹ All of this manifestation and concealment is part of the *līlā* of Bhagavān; through that *līlā*, by his own desire, Bhagavān Shri Kṛṣṇa is able to enjoy his own existence.

That *sevaka* in the Vallabhācārya *Sampradāya* who has been able to accept the world-view presented in the *Shuddhādvaita* as his own world-view has reached the plane of the conscious practice of the *Puṣṭimārga*.

¹MARFATIA, pp. 54–56.

The *Puṣṭimārga*

ALTHOUGH VALLABHĀCĀRYA'S THOUGHT taken as a whole is complex, the central doctrine of that thought is simple and easily located. Vallabhācārya clearly states this central doctrine in the second line of the sixteenth *shloka* of his "Bālabodhah" (the second of the sixteen treatises included in the *Śoḍashagrantha*). It is appropriate that the central doctrine appears in this particular treatise since this treatise was meant for the instruction (*bodha*) of the children (*bāla*) of adults who had been initiated into the *Sampradāya*.

THE DOSA AND THEIR REMOVAL

The line containing Vallabhācārya's central doctrine goes as follows:

The *jīvas* are by nature impure....¹

The fact that the *jīvas* are impure is the starting point from which Vallabhācārya built up his thought and it is the starting point from which any individual who should intend to put Vallabhācārya's teachings into practice must begin. In his *Shuddhādvaita* philosophy Vallabhācārya explained that the *jīvas* became impure (*duṣṭa*) because of the *avidyā*, itself a *shakti* of Shri Kṛṣṇa, which made them forget the true nature of themselves and the surrounding *jagat* as parts of Bhagavān Shri Kṛṣṇa and which caused them to fall into the egoistic, ignorant dream of *samsāra*. These impurities (*doṣa*) that covered the *jīvas* were so defiling, furthermore, that the *Brahmasambandha* mantra of initiation into the *Sampradāya* was itself for the removal of the impurities (see the second verse

¹SITĀRĀMA CATERVEDI, *Mahāprabhu Shrīmadvallabhācārya aur Puṣṭi-Mārga* (Vārāṇasi : Hindi-Sāhitya-Kuṭīra, 1967), p. 280. The English translation is mine.

of the “Siddhāntarahasya” quoted on p. 18 above); in other words, one could not even enter the *Sampradāya* in the *dusta* condition. The actual technique by which the *doṣa* would be removed from the *jīva* is described in the fourth *shloka* of the “Siddhāntarahasya” in the following words:

Impurities can be removed in no way other than by the abandonment of all things that have not been dedicated to Shri Kṛṣṇa.¹

The impurities were thus, according to the teachings of Vallabhācārya, to be removed by the dedication of all possessions to Shri Kṛṣṇa and by refraining from doing or enjoying anything not previously dedicated to Shri Kṛṣṇa. This dedication was implicit in the initial *Brahmasambandha* mantra—*Shri Kṛṣṇah sharanam mama*—(Shri Kṛṣṇa is my refuge) since in taking refuge with Shri Kṛṣṇa, in putting himself completely into Shri Kṛṣṇa’s protection, the *jīva* was placing himself and all things belonging to him in the care of Shri Kṛṣṇa.

Since the *Brahmasambandha* mantra initiates the *jīva* into the potential practice of the *Puṣṭimārga* at the same time as it initiates him into membership in the *Sampradāya*, detailed attention must be paid to the “ādhidai-vika”—to use Vallabhācārya’s own terminology—significance of the *Brahmasambandha* initiation. In all Indian thought there is an aversion to what is temporary and a desire for what is permanent; entanglement in the coils of change has always been feared, in India, by those who would remove themselves from the chain of birth and death. Since the craving for material pleasures, which are always temporary, has been regarded as the fundamental cause of entanglement in the chains of continual becoming and passing, most Indian systems of thought teach some sort of renunciation. The theory, stated simply, is that by overcoming all desires for pleasure—and by subduing all fear of pain—one would be able to cut himself free of the desires that bind him to the temporary, to the ever-changing, to the continually-dying and would be able to find that eternal permanence that supports, but is absolutely unaffected by, the swirls of change. The manner in which this renunciation has been attempted in India has varied from extreme physical renunciation, in the practice of which one withdraws physically away from all association with the people and objects and events of the ordinary world, to the mental renunciation that is the dominant doctrine of the *Bhagavad Gītā*. This mental renunciation is concisely stated at *Bhagavad Gītā* XVIII : 56–57 by Kṛṣṇa in the following words:

Doing continually all actions whatsoever, taking refuge in Me,

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 292. The English translation is mine.

he reaches by My grace the eternal, undying abode.

Surrendering in thought all actions to Me, regarding Me as the Supreme and resorting to steadfastness in understanding, do thou fix thy thought constantly on Me.¹

Here, the renoucer is to continue to perform the ordinary actions required in life in the world but with no desire for the results of those actions. The renoucer who follows the teachings of these two verses of the *Bhagavad Gītā* has inwardly rejected desires and fears as completely as has the ascetic who has outwardly severed himself from the sources of desire; but, the renoucer who has given the results of his actions to Kṛṣṇa instead of simply removing himself from action and desire is able to perform the actions that are socially and religiously required of every individual. At *Bhagavad Gītā* XVIII : 7-9, Kṛṣṇa makes clear that there are some actions which cannot rightfully be abandoned and which must be performed, though without desire for the results. His words on this subject are as follows :

Verily, the renunciation of any duty that ought to be done is not right. The abandonment of it through ignorance is declared to be of the nature of "dullness".

He who gives up a duty because it is painful or from fear of physical suffering, performs only the relinquishment of the "passionate" (*rājasa*) kind and does not gain the reward of relinquishment.

But he who performs a prescribed duty as a thing that ought to be done, renouncing all attachment and also the fruit—his relinquishment is regarded as one of "goodness".²

Vallabhācārya's teachings on the dedicating of oneself and all of one's actions and possessions before enjoying them to Shri Kṛṣṇa are meant to establish precisely the kind of renunciation of results of actions while performing the actions that Kṛṣṇa praises in the verses from the *Bhagavad Gītā* just quoted. By dedicating oneself and all that one has to Shri Kṛṣṇa, one is purifying oneself of the desires and fears that bind one to the *laukika* life and one is also purifying oneself of the egoistical notions of self-sufficiency and pride of possession.

With the awareness of the impurity of the *jīva* and of the reason for the effectiveness of the *Brahmasambandha* in removing this impurity, one

¹S. RADHAKRISHNAN, *The Bhagavad Gītā* (London : George Allen and Unwin, 1960), p. 372.

²*Ibid.*, pp. 353-354.

is ready to begin moving along the *Puṣṭimārga*. Vallabhācārya has outlined the course of the *Puṣṭimārga* in the last half of the second line of the sixteenth *shloka* and in the first line of the seventeenth *shloka* of the “Bālabodha” in the following words:

... for the obliteration of the impurities (*dosa*) one must continually practise

Hearing and the others and, when one has love for Shri Kṛṣṇa, then all of one's actions will be fulfilled.¹

By “hearing and the others” Vallabhācārya is referring to the nine steps of *bhakti*. These nine steps of *bhakti* have been accepted by most of the sects of the *bhaktimārga* as essential for the centring of the mind and body on the practice of devotion. Since these nine steps form an important part of the *Puṣṭimārga*, each should be discussed in some detail. The clearest description of the nine steps is found in the *Bhakti Rasāmṛta Sindhu* of Rūpa Gosvāmī (died about A.D. 1555), a member of the *saṃpradāya* founded by Kṛṣṇa Caitanya who was sent by Kṛṣṇa Caitanya to Braj in order to restore the ancient holy places associated with Shri Kṛṣṇa and to spread the doctrines of the *bhaktimārga*.²

The first of the nine steps is usually given as *shravaṇa*, hearing or listening to accounts of the life of Shri Kṛṣṇa—as, for example, the accounts of Shri Kṛṣṇa’s life in Braj that are given in the tenth book of the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* and in the *padas* in Braj Bhāṣā composed by Sūradāsa, listening to the praising of the qualities of Shri Kṛṣṇa, or simply listening to the names of Shri Kṛṣṇa. In the *bhaktimārga*, as in most Indian approaches to religion, the name of a deity has great potency.³

The second step is *kīrtana*, which has already been mentioned several times in the course of this study. *Kīrtana* is the singing aloud of the names and the virtues and the events in the *līlās* of Shri Kṛṣṇa. *Kīrtana* is intended to fill the hearts of the *bhaktas* with the emotional experience of the various *līlās* which were performed by Shri Kṛṣṇa. Although groups of *bhaktas* might gather anywhere for the singing of *kīrtana* in honour of Shri Kṛṣṇa, the most famous *kīrtanas* in the Vallabhācārya *Saṃpradāya* are those sung, together with musical accompaniment that is often excellent, before the divine *svarūpa* at the periods of *darshana* in the temples belonging to the *Sampradāya*. The subject of a *kīrtana* is, by

¹CATURVEDĪ, p. 280. The English translation is mine.

²PRABHU DAYĀLA MĪTALA, *Braj ke Dharma-Saṃpradāyon kā Itihāsa* (Delhi : National Publishing House, 1968), pp. 311–314.

³RŪPA GOSVĀMĪ, *Bhakti-Rasāmṛta-Sindhuḥ*, trans. by TRIDANDI SWĀMĪ BHAKTI HṛDAYA BON MAHĀRĀJ (3 vols.; Brindaban: Institute of Oriental Philosophy, 1965), I. 183–187. Reference is to verses 170–174 of the second *lahari* (wave).

tradition in the Vallabhācārya *Sampradāya*, never sorrowful.¹

Smarana or *smṛti*, both of which mean “remembrance” or “the act of calling something to mind”, is the next of the nine steps. Every *bhakta* is supposed to remember his god continually throughout his life and on the moment of his death.²

Pāda-sevana means, literally, “the act of honouring or worshipping the feet” and refers to the reverent service which the *bhakta* performs before the *svarūpa* of Shrī Kṛṣṇa. The worshipping of the feet of the *svarūpa* emphasizes the *bhakta*’s humble attitude.

The next step is *arcana*, the act of worship of the *svarūpa*. Worship in Vallabhācārya’s *Sampradāya*, as explained on pages 46–52 above, differs from the type of worship done in an ordinary Hindu temple.³

Vandana, the respectful paying of homage to the deity, is usually done with *arcana*. *Vandana* can include prayers to Kṛṣṇa.

The seventh of the nine steps is *dāsyā*, servitude. *Dāsyā* is the complete devotion of one’s time and one’s energy and all that one does to the benefit of Shrī Kṛṣṇa just as a servant in the ordinary world devotes himself to the service of his master. One who cultivates the attitude of *bhakti* called *dāsyā* considers all of his activities to be done for his god.⁴

The eighth step is *sakhya*, companionship. According to Rūpa Gosvāmī, there are two kinds of *sakhya*: one is complete faith in Shrī Kṛṣṇa’s willingness to give protection from the dangers of the world and the other is the feeling with which a *bhakta* may consider himself a friend of Shrī Kṛṣṇa and treat him with the kind of attachment that is, in ordinary life, reserved for very close friends.⁵

The ninth and last step is the most difficult of the series, according to Rūpa Gosvāmī. This is the step of *ātmanivedana*, self-dedication. By self-dedication one gives himself up utterly to Shrī Kṛṣṇa and no longer takes any thought of his own welfare, for he has placed himself completely in Shrī Kṛṣṇa’s protection. Rūpa Gosvāmī has the following to say about the difficulty of practising *ātmanivedana*:

As both *Sakhya*... and *ātma-nivedana*... are very rare and difficult, it is only a very few deserving and qualified persons with ever deepening faith that are found to possess them as results of their spiritual practices.⁶

Although Rūpa Gosvāmī belonged to the Caitanya *Sampradāya* and not

¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 166–170, vol. I. Reference is to verses 145–148 of the second *lahari*.

² *Ibid.*, I, pp. 187–188. Second *lahari*, verses 175–177.

³ *Ibid.*, I, pp. 160–163. Second *lahari*, verses 137–139.

⁴ *Ibid.*, I, pp. 192–198. Second *lahari*, verses 183–187.

⁵ *Ibid.*, I, pp. 198–203. Second *lahari*, verses 188–193.

⁶ *Ibid.*, I, pp. 206. Second *lahari*, verse 198.

to Vallabhācārya's sect, the definitions of the nine steps in the practice of *bhakti* are general in the *bhaktimārga* and would be accepted by Vallabhācārya and most other Vaiṣṇava *bhaktas* in India. These are the nine steps that Vallabhācārya says must be continually practised for freedom from the impurities that normally attach themselves to *jīvas*. These nine steps are the general elements of the *Puṣṭimārga*. There is only one point at which Vallabhācārya's attitude towards these nine steps differs markedly from that of Rūpa Gosvāmī and other Vaiṣṇava *bhaktas*: Vallabhācārya makes the ninth and most difficult step, the *ātma-nivedana*, the initial step in the *Puṣṭimārga*. Vallabhācārya begins with that attitude of mind which is, for other *bhaktas* not in his *Sampradāya*, the very apex of devotional achievement and the result of careful cultivation of the other eight steps over a long period of time. Evidently, Vallabhācārya saw the first eight steps of the practice of *bhakti* as being parts of the ninth, which would be the whole. Such a visualization would require the attitude of complete self-dedication for the correct practice of the eight subsidiary steps. It is also, no doubt, true that Vallabhācārya intended his *Puṣṭimārga* for the *puṣṭi jīvas* who would already have powerful, though perhaps latent, aptitude for the practice of devotional religion.¹

The *ātmanivedana* mantra, by which one receives final initiation into the *Sampradāya* (see p. 20 above), goes as follows:

Om. The God Krishna is my refuge [*Shrīkrṣṇa sharanam mama*].
Distracted by the infinite pain and torment caused by the separation
from Krishna, which has extended over a space of time measured by
thousands of years, I now, to the holy Krishna, do dedicate [*samarpa-*
yāmi] my bodily faculties, my life, my soul, and its belongings, with
my wife, my house, my children, my whole substance, and my own
self. O Krishna; I am thy servant [*dāsa*].²

By means of this mantra one enters into the attitude of total self-surrender that is mandatory for the practice of the *Puṣṭimārga*.

Now that the central doctrine—that the *jīva* is impure by reason of the ignorance that has become its very nature—of Vallabhācārya's thought has been discussed along with the outline of the means by which the impurities may be removed—by the faithful practice of the nine steps of the *bhaktimārga* which culminate in the absolute self-surrender of the *jīva* to Shrī Krṣṇa, it will be possible to inquire into the relationship that should exist between the *Puṣṭimārgī bhakta* and Shrī Krṣṇa.

¹BHAI MANILAL C. PAREKH, *Sri Vallabhacharya : Life, Teachings and Movement* (Rajkot : Sri Bhagavata Dharma Mission, 1943), pp. 237–239.

²F. S. GROWSE, *Mathurā : A District Memoir* (Allāhābād : N. W. Provinces & Oudh Gov't Press, 1883), p. 287.

**THE SIGNIFICANCE OF PUSTI IN
VALLABHACARYA'S THOUGHT**

In the tenth *adhyāya* of the second *skandha* of the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* in the first line of *shloka* number four the following statement is made by Sukdeva, the narrator of the *Purāṇa*:

... POSANAM TADANUGRAHAH.¹

This phrase, which means “the *anugraha* (grace) [of Shrī Krṣṇa] is *poṣana*” was, for Vallabhācārya, a key scriptural passage. It was from this passage that Vallabhācārya took not just the name of the *mārga* to spiritual fulfillment that he taught but also the hope that would sustain those who should attempt that *mārga*. The word *poṣana*, which signifies the act of nourishing, fostering, preserving, or supporting,² is derived from the Sanskrit verbal root *puṣ* which expresses the action of being nourished, well-fed, healthy and the action of thriving, increasing, growing larger, prospering. The basic idea expressed by the root *puṣ* is one of the arrival at a condition of physical prosperity and success; but, the root *puṣ* develops further in meaning until it also signifies the act of causing something to flourish, the act of giving strength or support to someone or something, the act of developing or promoting something.³ It is in the sense of the act of strengthening or supporting that the word *poṣana* is used both in the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* and in Vallabhācārya’s doctrines, though Vallabhācārya usually substitutes “*puṣṭi*,” which also comes from the root *puṣ* and has the same meaning as *poṣana*, for *poṣana*. It is, thus, the *anugraha* (grace) that is the support and the support is the *anugraha*. Vallabhācārya considers *anugraha* and *puṣṭi* to be synonymous; both refer to the divine grace which is the only source of support for the *jīva*, the only source of strength for the *jīva*, and the only means by which the *jīva* can successfully reach the goal of the *Puṣṭimārga*, eternal association with Shrī Krṣṇa in his *līlā*. The etymology of the word “*anugraha*” bears out Vallabhācārya’s usage of it (following the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*) as synonymous with *puṣṭi*; *anugraha*, which refers to the act of showing kindness, of giving favours, of promoting, and of helping as well as to the concepts of favour and kindness, comes from the Sanskrit verbal root *grah* with the prefix *anu*—which together

¹VYĀSA, *Shrimadbhāgavata-Mahāpurāṇa* (2 vols.; Gorakhpura: Gītā Press, 1965), I, p. 191.

²MONIER WILLIAMS, *A Sanskrit-English Dictionary* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1960), p. 650.

³Ibid., p. 638.

signify the action of receiving, welcoming, upholding, and favouring.¹

The *Puṣṭimārga* is, thus, the way (*mārga* means, literally, “a seeking or a search, a track, a path, a road, a way to or through something, a course, a method, a manner” and was used to denote the way pointed out by the Buddha for escape from the pain of existence)² in which the only support and strength is the grace of Bhagavān Shrī Kṛṣṇa; it is also the way that goes to the grace of Shrī Kṛṣṇa, since only by the grace of Shrī Kṛṣṇa can one be taken into the eternal *līlā*. In other words, as has been pointed out already in connection with *sevā* in Chapter III of this study (see pp. 56–79 above), in Vallabhācārya’s *Puṣṭimārga* the *sādhana* (means) is the same as the *phala* (result, end). The *anugraha* or *puṣṭi* of Bhagavān is the end towards which one follows the *Puṣṭimārga* and the *anugraha* or *puṣṭi* of Bhagavān is the only means by which one may reach the *anugraha* of Bhagavān. Only by the grace of Shrī Kṛṣṇa does one receive the grace of Shrī Kṛṣṇa; nothing that one may do can bring that grace. In terms of the actual relationship between the *jīva* and Shrī Kṛṣṇa, the absolute reliance upon grace to receive grace means that the *jīva* must abandon his self-centred attitudes and devote himself completely to the *sevā* (service) of Shrī Kṛṣṇa. The ability to perform *sevā* wholeheartedly as the servant (*dāsa* or *sevaka*) of Shrī Kṛṣṇa is a sure sign that one has received the grace of Shrī Kṛṣṇa since only by the grace of Shrī Kṛṣṇa may one have the ability to perform true *sevā*. Since one who has received the grace of Shrī Kṛṣṇa performs the *sevā* of Shrī Kṛṣṇa, *sevā* is also called the goal of the *Puṣṭimārga* as well as the *sādhana* (means, method) of the *Puṣṭimārga*. At this point in the study of the *Puṣṭimārga*, it would seem that the style of *bhakta* which Vallabhācārya encouraged must have been that of the devotion of the servant (*sevaka* or *dāsa*) to his master (*svāmī*). This is not, however, the case; there is a dimension of very great importance to the *Puṣṭimārga* which remains to be discussed.

BHAVA

This dimension is that of *sevā*. The physical appearance of congregational *sevā* in the temples (*havelī*) of Vallabhācārya’s *Sampradāya* has been described and something has been said about *sevā* as a vital part of the practice of the *Puṣṭimārga*, but the powerful influence of *sevā* in the transforming of the *laukika* into the *alaukika* has not yet been dealt with. Vallabhācārya, in agreement with the general opinion of the followers of the *bhaktimārga*, accepted the division of *bhaktibhāva* into four main

¹Ibid., p. 32.

²Ibid., p. 812.

bhāvas—*dāsyā bhāva*, *sakhya bhāva*, *vātsalya bhāva*, and *madhura bhāva*—to which could be added, in imitation of the ninth *sthāyi-bhāva* of the *rasa* theory of classical Sanskrit literature,¹ a fifth *bhāva* called *shānta bhāva*. Although *sevā* could be performed in the spirit of any one of these five *bhaktibhāvas* and still be done in accordance with the *Puṣṭimārga*, two of them—*dāsyā bhāva* and *shānta bhāva*—have not had nearly so great an influence on the *sevā* of the *Puṣṭimārga* as have the other three and one of them—*vātsalya bhāva*—has had a place of such importance in the practice of the *Puṣṭimārga* that it has come to be considered the dominant *bhaktibhāva* of the Vallabhācārya *Sampradāya*. In the following paragraphs each of these *bhaktibhāvas* will be discussed with special attention paid to its position with regard to the *sevā* of the Vallabhācārya *Sampradāya's Puṣṭimārga*.

The *dāsyā bhaktibhāva* is the devotional emotion expressed in the manner of a servant's attitude towards his master. The *bhakta* who expresses his devotion with the emotion of *dāsyā* experience keeps a wide gulf between himself and his god; he emphasizes the glory and power of the deity at the same time as he belittles and humbles himself. All *bhaktas* avoid any hint of pride as they perform their devotions and so all of them naturally avoid any sort of self-glorification; but the *bhaktas* who approach their god through the *dāsyā bhāva* exceed by far the humility of other *bhaktas*. Since there is an element of *dāsyā bhāva* in all the *bhaktibhāvas*—for one of the nine steps of the *bhaktimārga* is worship of the deity with *dāsyā bhāva*, the followers of Vallabhācārya also occasionally experienced this *bhāva*; but, perhaps because the *dāsyā bhāva* is cold, austere, and formal—as would be the relationship between a mighty king and an ordinary subject, which is one of the patterns for *dāsyā bhāva*—while *bhakti* is approached with more warmth and informality in Vallabhācārya's *Sampradāya*, the *dāsyā bhāva* has never had great emphasis in the practice of the *Puṣṭimārga*. The *Aṣṭachāpa* poets who composed *kirtana* for the *svarūpa* of Shri Govardhannāthaji sang *padas* in the *dāsyā bhāva* only sparingly.

The *sakhya bhāva*, as it appears in the practice of the *Puṣṭimārga*, is that emotion by which one devotes himself to Shri Kṛṣṇa as if Shri Kṛṣṇa were one's equal in age and in status. When the *Aṣṭachāpa* sang *padas* describing Shri Kṛṣṇa as he took the cows out to graze or as he played games in the forest with the other cowherds (*gopas*) they were singing out of *sakhya bhāva*. Since the *Aṣṭachāpa* poets were also the *Aṣṭasakhā* (the eight companions of Shri Kṛṣṇa), the *sakhya bhāva* is often the inspiration for their poems. The experience of *sakhya bhāva* was confined only to the most advanced of the *bhaktas* of the Vallabhācārya *Sampradāya*. That

¹DANIEL H. H. INGALLS (trans.), *Sanskrit Poetry from Vidyākara's "Treasury"* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1968), pp. 13–15.

bhakta who was able to feel *sakhya bhāva* was looked upon as having received special divine favour; in the four *vārtās* translated in the second part of this study there will from time to time be accounts of Shrī Govardhannāthajī's play with one of his *bhaktas*. Such play was, of course, *alaukika* and could not be witnessed or sensed in any way by ordinary people. While enjoying this play the *bhakta* and Shrī Kṛṣṇa would be absolutely equal and their relationship would be one of affectionate playfulness. The fear and awe which stand between the *bhakta* and Shrī Kṛṣṇa when the *bhakta* approaches him through *dāsyā bhāva* are completely lacking when the approach is through *sakhya bhāva*.¹

Vātsalya bhāva, devotion to Shrī Kṛṣṇa as if the *bhakta* were the parent of Shrī Kṛṣṇa, was the *bhaktibhāva* which Vallabhācārya himself cultivated and spread through his teachings. Yashodā and Nanda, the foster parents of Shrī Kṛṣṇa while he was living in Braj, provide the pattern for this kind of *bhāva*. In order that a *bhakta* may feel the sublime joy of caring for Shrī Kṛṣṇa as if he were a little child, Shrī Kṛṣṇa may allow that *bhakta* to feel *vātsalya bhāva*. Sūradāsa in particular has composed a large number of *padas* in the spirit of *vātsalya bhakti*; one of these poems on the *vātsalya* theme is quoted in full on page 4 of this study. In Braj today there are temples in which small images of Shrī Kṛṣṇa as a child are placed in cradles and *bhaktas* are allowed to rock those cradles. It is said in the Vallabhācārya *Sampradāya* that if a *bhakta* has been favoured with the divine grace allowing him to reach the highest pinnacle of *bhaktibhāva*, then Shrī Kṛṣṇa, the omnipotent, the being within which all exists, will place himself in that *bhakta*'s control. This generally takes place when the *bhakta* approaches Shrī Kṛṣṇa with *vātsalya bhaktibhāva*.

The last of the four main types of *bhaktibhāva* is *madhura bhāva*, the devotional emotion by which the *bhakta* thinks of himself as being one of the *gopis* (cowherd girls of Braj) who loved Shrī Kṛṣṇa and who enjoyed love-play with him in the nightly *līlās* in Braj. Vallabhācārya recognized *madhura bhaktibhāva* as being an effective *bhāva* for reaching the experience of love for Shrī Kṛṣṇa. Vallabhācārya even referred to Shrī Svāminījī, Shrī Kṛṣṇa's beloved—probably including the character of Kṛṣṇa's later wife Rukmiṇī as well as that of the foremost among the *gopis* Rādhā (whom Shrī Kṛṣṇa also married according to the followers of Vallabhācārya), in some of his writings. It was, however, Viṭṭhalanāthajī who evidently increased the place of Shrī Svāminījī and the *madhura bhāva* in the Vallabhācārya *Sampradāya*. Viṭṭhalanāthajī supposedly encouraged the growing importance of *madhura bhakti* in the *Sampradāya* because

¹ MALIK MOHAMMAD, *Ālavār Bhakton kā Tamil-Prabandham aur Hindi Kṛṣṇa-Kāvya* (Āgra: Vinoda Pustaka Mandira, 1964), pp. 248–250.

of the influence of the Caitanya *Sampradāya*, in which *madhura bhakti-bhāva* is the dominant *bhāva*. Because the *gopis* expressed pure love for Shri Kṛṣṇa they are accepted as the *gurus* of the *Puṣṭimārga* and the *bhaktas* try to feel *bhaktibhāva* as close to the *bhaktibhāva* of the *gopis* as possible. The *gopis* are divided into three groups in the traditions of Vallabhācārya's *Sampradāya* and each of these three groups expresses a variation of the *madhura bhāva*. One group of *gopis* takes part in the *bālā līlā* (childhood *līlā*) of Shri Kṛṣṇa; in this group are the *gopis* whom Kṛṣṇa and his childhood companions (*sakhā*) made the objects of their mischievous pranks. The *bhāva* of this group of *gopis* is actually *vātsalya bhāva* rather than *madhura bhāva* since Shri Kṛṣṇa is perceived by this group as an immature child and the erotic feelings of *madhura bhāva* are entirely absent. The other two groups of *gopis*, however, portray pure *madhura bhakti*. One group of them is made up of unmarried *gopis* who desire to marry Shri Kṛṣṇa and whose love for him is, therefore, not outside the laws and conventions of society. Shri Svāminījī is considered to be in this group of *gopis*. The other group of *gopis* has great symbolic value for the *bhaktas* on the *Puṣṭimārga* for they express their love for Shri Kṛṣṇa though that love is contrary to all social and religious laws. The *gopis* in this group are married, but they leave their husbands and go to the forest with Kṛṣṇa. Their devotion demonstrates that love-filled devotion to Shri Kṛṣṇa is more important than any *laukika* or Vedic concern; one who is absorbed in love of Shri Kṛṣṇa has left the ordinary world and its cares altogether. The poets of the *Aṣṭachāpa sang padas* inspired by the *bhāva* of all three groups of *gopis*. Although the *vātsalya bhāva* is the chief *bhāva* of the *Puṣṭimārga*, *mādhura bhāva* is also important there.¹ The poets of the *Aṣṭachāpa* (*Aṣṭasakhā*) were able to enjoy *mādhura bhāva* in their *sakhi* forms which they assume at night. The *gopis* may be looked upon as representing human souls and, through their single-minded, love-filled devotion to Shri Kṛṣṇa, would symbolize the yearning of the *jīvas* for the divine. The *gopis* are also often considered to be fragments of the eternal *shakti* of Shri Kṛṣṇa. In either case, though, the importance of the *gopis* for the followers of Vallabhācārya, as for the followers of the other Vaiṣṇava *bhakti* sects of Vallabhācārya's time, is in the *mādhura bhāva* through which they realized their devotion to Shri Kṛṣṇa. This *bhāva* has become the goal for great numbers of Vaiṣṇava *bhaktas* of India. Shri Svāminījī (*Rādhā*) presents a meaning different from the meaning of the *gopis*. Shri Svāminījī is never in the Vallabhācārya *Sampradāya* or in any other Vaiṣṇava sect seen as a symbol of the *jīva*, for Shri Svāminījī is the *shakti* of Shri Kṛṣṇa and is, therefore, entitled to worship in her own right. It is said in Vallabhācārya's *Sampradāya* that Shri Svāminījī is *Māyā*, the *shakti* (power) by means of which Shri Kṛṣṇa Parabrahman manifests the world for the playing of

¹PRABHU DAYĀLA MĪTALA, *Aṣṭachāpa-Paricaya* (Mathurā: Agravāla Press, 1950), p. 50.

his *lilā*. When Shri Kṛṣṇa appeared in the earthly Braj, Shri Svāminījī appeared also as the *gopi* named *Rādhā* (*Rādhā* is not named in the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*, though members of Vallabhācārya's *Sampradāya* say that she is, nevertheless, in that *Purāṇa* in the form of the *gopi* upon whom Shri Kṛṣṇa showers special affection); later, when Kṛṣṇa went to Dvārakā¹ in modern Gujarat state, Shri Svāminījī appeared in the form of his chief wife Rukminījī.² The personification of the power of a god as the goddess who is his consort is not restricted to Vaiṣṇavas but is very common in all branches of Indian religious thought.³

The *gopis* have another very important function in the *bhakti* of Vaiṣṇava sects like the Vallabha *Sampradāya*: they express the heart-rending grief of *viraha* (separation) from Shri Kṛṣṇa. The archetypal *viraha* is the *viraha* of the *gopis* when Kṛṣṇa left them behind forever with his life as a cowherd of Braj to go to Mathurā to fulfil his destiny as a prince of the Yādava clan. The *gopis* were so deeply attached to Kṛṣṇa that they suffered extreme misery in their *viraha* when he left them. For Vallabhācārya this misery of *viraha* undergone by the *gopis* was not to be avoided as a misfortune, but was to be desired as a proof of ardent devotion. In perfect *bhakti*—as in perfect secular love in classical Indian literature—both *samyoga* (union of lover and beloved) and *viyoga* (*viraha*, separation of lover from beloved) must be experienced. In order to be sure of the sincerity of his love for Shri Kṛṣṇa, the *bhakta*—like the *gopis*—must suffer from periods of *viraha* as well as enjoy periods of *samyoga*. By the alternation of *samyoga* and *viraha*, the *bhakta* is drawn away from *laukika* existence towards the *alaukika* plane of devotion to Shri Kṛṣṇa.

The importance of the *gopis* and their *madhura bhāvabhakti* is summed up in the following *sūtras* from the *Nārada Bhakti Sūtras*:

But Nārada is of the opinion that the essential characteristics of *bhakti* are the consecration of all activities, by complete self-surrender, to him, and extreme anguish if he were to be forgotten. (19)

Examples do exist of such perfect expression of *bhakti*. (20)

¹For information on the shrines and temples of Dvārakā and for the history of that Vaiṣṇava pilgrimage centre see the following: RĀJENDRA KUMĀRA NIJHĀVANA, *Dvārakā Paricaya* (Dvārakā : Lions Clubs of Dwarka, 1966), pp. 1–18; ZAINUDDIN DAWOOD ANSARI and MADHUKAR SHRIDHAR MATE, *Excavations at Dwarka* (Poona : Deccan College Post-graduate and Research Institute, 1966); R. K. TRIVEDI, *Census of India 1961*, vol. V : Gujarat, Part VII-B, *Fairs and Festivals* (Delhi : Central Government Publications, 1965), pp. 189–192.

²SHARĀṄABHĀRĪ GOSWĀMĪ, *Kṛṣṇabhakti-Kāvyā meṇ Sakhībhāva* (Vārāṇasi : Caukhambā Vidyābhāvana, 1966), pp. 79–80.

³DANIELOU, ALAIN, *Hindu Polytheism* (New York : Bollingen Foundation, 1964), pp. 253–267.

Such indeed was the *bhakti* of the *Gopīs* of Vraja. (21)¹

The fifth *bhāva* of *bhakti*, the *shānta* (tranquil) *bhāva*, is free from all extremes of emotion; in it there is no passion, neither of love nor of hate. *Shānta bhaktibhāva* is devotion practised in peaceful contemplation away from all wordly distractions and free of all ordinary personal relationships.² This type of *bhaktibhāva* was not favoured by Vallabhācārya, who taught *bhakti* based on the strong emotional ties already present in human beings: that of the master-servant, husband-wife, king-subject, father and mother-children; that of friend-friend of the same sex; that of parent-child, adult-child; and that of lover-beloved. In Vallabhācārya's thought the ideal was the lifting of human emotion (*bhāva*) by means of *sevā* done in the spirit of one of the four main *bhaktibhāvas* from the *laukika* experience to the *alaukika* experience. *Shānta bhāva* was not suited to that ideal.

All of the *bhaktibhāvas* through which *sevā* is done in the *Puṣtimārga* are *bhāvas* of love (*prema*) and the *Pustimārga* is dedicated to pure love for Shri Kṛṣṇa. The *bhakti* of the *Pustimārga* has as its outstanding characteristic the absolute love for the divine.³ In the "Bhaktivardhī", one of Vallabhācārya's writings included in the *Ṣodashagrantha* the development of this pure love is outlined. One should begin by living in his own family and carrying on his ordinary business, but without attachment to either family or business since both would have been dedicated to Shri Kṛṣṇa, and by observing the nine steps of the *bhaktimārga*. Eventually, love for Shri Kṛṣṇa will begin to grow in the heart of such a *bhakta* until finally this love (*prema*) has so overshadowed worldly and family concerns that these concerns no longer distract the *bhakta* from complete absorption in devotion to Shri Kṛṣṇa. This complete absorption is called *āsakti*, the state of being detached from worldly feelings. When the *bhakta* has thus become detached from worldly life he reaches the state of *vyasana*. *Vyasana* is a state marked by addiction to some vice or evil habit in the ordinary, *laukika* sense, but in the *alaukika* sense as it was used by Vallabhācārya *vyasana* refers to that condition of total love for Shri Kṛṣṇa that overwhelms the *bhakta* as completely as vice overwhelms a wicked person. This is the highest point of love that the *bhakta* can reach with the *anugraha* (*puṣṭi*) of Bhagavān.⁴ In the state of *vyasana* the *bhakta* reaches one of the three rewards of perfect *sevā*: either eternal experience of the *līlās* of Shri Kṛṣṇa in Goloka as a *sakhā* of Shri Kṛṣṇa, or union

¹SWĀMĪ TYĀGĪSHĀNANDA, *Aphorisms on the Gospel of Divine Love or Nārada Bhakti Sūtras* (Mylapore, Madras: Sri Ramakrishna Math, 1955), pp. 6-7.

²MOHAMMAD, pp. 268-271.

³MĪTALA, *Asṭachāpa-Paricaya*, p. 59.

⁴CATARVEDĪ, p. 305. "Bhaktivardhī," verses 1-5.

into the divine being of Shri Kṛṣṇa in Goloka to be manifested by him in his *līlā*, or the ability to be a non-human or inanimate entity or a non-participating human being in Goloka and so to witness the eternal *līlā*.¹

This is the *Puṣtimārga*, the way by which the human *jīva*, by relying on the grace of Shri Kṛṣṇa can reach the true, *alaukika*, eternal world of delight in Goloka. The whole process is symbolized by the cow-cowherd theme that runs through the life of Shri Kṛṣṇa in Braj, both earthly and divine—for Goloka is Cow (*go*) World (*loka*). The symbolism goes as follows. Shri Kṛṣṇa Parabrahman is beyond all human senses and beyond all human powers of reason. Nevertheless, Shri Kṛṣṇa Parabrahman (since everything is the manifestation of Shri Kṛṣṇa except the *jīva's* imaginary interpretation of existence that is *samsāra*) can be perceived and he can be attained (since the attainer is only realizing himself in his true nature as a part of Shri Kṛṣṇa). Shri Kṛṣṇa in his partial manifestation as the *jagat* is called the *gocara*. Etymologically, *gocara* means a pasture for cattle and has come to mean in philosophical usage the field of the objects of sense perception or the objects of sense perception themselves.² The cattle (*go*) themselves are the human senses, unruly and ungovernable if not under control. The *gocara*, the field of the wandering senses, is not, however, left in anarchy, for there is Kṛṣṇa Gopāla, the Protector (*pāla*) of the sense-cows (*go*), the “sense-herd”. In the divine world of Goloka the senses are finally subdued and tamed and transformed from the *laukika* to the *alaukika*. The *sakhā-sakhi* who are constantly with Shri Kṛṣṇa and his *shakti* Svāminījī are the *gopas* and *gopis*, the male and female controllers of the sense-cows—those with their senses under control. To be a *gopa* or a *gopī* with the master herdsman Gopāla in Goloka is the highest state which a human *jīva* can enjoy and the *bhāva* of the *gopas* and *gopīs* is the highest emotion that he can feel.

In Part I of this study of the *Sampradāya* of Vallabhācārya the events of the early sectarian history and the nature of the sectarian doctrines have been examined; in Part II the actual life of the sect will be shown through the sectarian literature.

¹CIMMANALĀ HARISHANKARAJĪ, *Puṣtimārgopadeshikā*, trans. into Hindi by SHRĪMĀDHAVA SHARMĀ (Vārāṇasī : Shrimādhava Sharmā, 1941), pp. 146–148.

²MONIER-WILLIAMS, p. 364.

Introduction

PART II

Four *Vārtās* from the *Caurāśī Vaiṣṇavan kī Vārtā*

one day four hundred years ago, when he developed a desire to stay bound up with the phenomenal world of interest in the spiritual variety of Vaishnavism which slept over North India during the said period.¹ There are several reasons for the close relationship between Kṛṣṇadevī and Rājā Shilpa, the names of vernacular biography—no opposition between the religious discourses of two Indian writers of that epoch of time. Both Kṛṣṇadevī and Rājā Shilpa have from the spiritual point of view, Rājā devotee and teacher writing, but from the Vaishnava point of view, an ordinary practitioner of the art of writing, where—according to the designation *Durgā-pūjā-vācavibhāṣaṇa*—he is an expert in myth, and the village in the immediate vicinity of that town where—according to the same name—Kṛṣṇa played out his dream life in childhood and youth.

One of the reasons for the connection between Kṛṣṇadevī and Rājā Shilpa relation might be assumption made by the unknown author of the sixteenth-century discourse of Sri Jayadevan Dvārakāśrama that Rājā, as a states-

¹ According to some estimates the "Āśramāraṇa" of the Vaidika Bhāskarapāṇi took place in 1572 A.D.

² According to Vaidika Bhāskarapāṇi the "Āśramāraṇa" of the Vaidika Bhāskarapāṇi took place in 1572 A.D. According to another date it took place in 1573 A.D.

Introduction

BRAJ BHASA

ALTHOUGH IT WOULD not find a place on any roster of the major languages of modern India, as recently as the period between the sixteenth and nineteenth centuries, Braj Bhāṣā was the dominant vehicle for the vernacular literature produced in that region, lying within the great Gangā-Yamunā river system and extending from the Panjab to the western borders of Bengāl, which forms the heartland—in the cultural as well as in the geographical sense—of North India. The rise, period of full bloom, and decline of Braj Bhāṣā as a literary language during that period of roughly four hundred years was not an isolated development, but was closely bound up with the phenomenal surge of interest in the Kṛṣṇa-bhakti variety of Vaiṣṇavism which swept over North India during the same period.¹ There are several reasons for the close connection between Kṛṣṇa-bhakti and Braj Bhāṣā, the bhāṣā or vernacular language—as opposed to Sanskrit, the refined language of pan-Indian culture—of Braj, a region of western Uttar Pradesh and eastern Rājasthān. From the linguistic point of view, Braj covers considerable territory, but from the Vaiṣṇava point of view, it consists primarily of the city of Mathurā, where—according to the *Bhāgavata Purāna*—Kṛṣṇa was born on earth, and the villages in the immediate vicinity of that city, where—according to the same source—Kṛṣṇa played out his divine *līlā* in childhood and youth.

One of the reasons for the connection between Kṛṣṇa-bhakti and Braj Bhāṣā revolves around the assumption made by the sixteenth-century devotees of Shri Kṛṣṇa in North India that Shri Kṛṣṇa, as a native

¹DHIRENDRA VARMĀ (ed.), *Hindi Sāhitya Kosha* (2 vols.; Vārāṇasī: Jñānamandala Ltd., 1964), vol. I, pp. 565.

²DHIRENDRA VARMĀ, *La Langue Braj* (Paris: Adrien-Maisonneuve, 1935), pp. 38, 42. DHIRENDRA VARMĀ, *Grāmīṇa Hindi* (Allāhābād: Sāhitya Bhavana, 1957), pp. 17–18.

of Braj, spoke Braj Bhāṣā; the Kṛṣṇa-*bhaktas* naturally felt that the most appropriate language in which to praise Shrī Kṛṣṇa would be his own language, Braj Bhāṣā. Secondly, Braj Bhāṣā has a literary history extending back into at least the early fifteenth century—which is only now being explored—and so had already been used as a vehicle for literary expression when the first great Vaiṣṇava poets began composing their devotional hymns, called *kīrtanas*, praising Shrī Kṛṣṇa in Braj Bhāṣā. In employing Braj Bhāṣā, then, the Vaiṣṇava poets were spared the difficulty of creating a new literary language.¹ Thirdly, Braj Bhāṣā, as a sister dialect of Panjabī, Avadhbī, Bhojapurī, varieties of Rājasthānī, and the other Hindī dialects of the North Indian heartland, could be understood with a bit of effort and practice by people all over that vast region. This was especially important for the *bhaktas* of Shrī Kṛṣṇa who wanted the greatest spread possible for their movements. Fourthly, since the *bhaktas* who came to the holy land of Braj spoke many different languages and dialects—Vallabhācārya, for example, spoke Telegu and an eastern dialect of Hindī natively while the mother tongue of most of the followers of Caitanya was Bengālī—they needed a neutral language equally acceptable to all for the propagation and poetic expression of their *bhakti*. The natural choice was Braj Bhāṣā. The fifth reason is somewhat more complex than the others. All of the famous sixteenth-century *bhaktas* of Shrī Kṛṣṇa who established *sampradāyas* in Braj, though they differed on major and minor points of doctrine, agreed that the objective of a sincere *bhakta* should be the experience, expression, and transmission of *bhāva*, the attainment of actual emotional and attitudinal identity with one of the prototype *bhaktas*: Kṛṣṇa's parents, his friends, and the women he loved. The ability to experience such *bhāva* was held to be *alaukika* and was considered to be acquired only through the grace of Shrī Kṛṣṇa; it could not be limited by any of the artificial divisions—as, for example, those of caste, sex, nationality, or degree of education—of *laukika* existence. Each individual, as a part of Shrī Kṛṣṇa, had the potential to feel the *bhāva* of *bhakti*. Consequently, the Vaiṣṇava *bhaktas* desired and encouraged the interest of people of all classes in their movements. They needed a language, through which the *bhāva* of their *bhakti* might be expressed, understandable by, and familiar to, the ordinary masses of people as well as to those of higher social status; Braj Bhāṣā served their requirements perfectly. Furthermore, *bhāva*, since it had to be genuine and spring directly from the heart of the *bhakta*, was to be expressed as

¹VARMĀ, *La Langue Braj*, pp. 25–29. The use of Braj Bhāṣā as the literary language best suited for *kīrtanas* expressing *bhakti* to Shrī Kṛṣṇa spread all over North India; see: PRABHU DAYĀLA MĪTALA, *Caitanya Mata aur Braj Sāhitya* (Mathurā : Sāhitya Saṅsthāna, 1962), p. 129.

simply and clearly as possible with a maximum of emotional impact and a minimum of literary pride. While beauty of language and composition was very definitely desired and cultivated for the greater glory of Shri Krsna and for the delight of his *bhaktas*, the sixteenth-century Vaisnava poets made concern with the techniques of poetics subservient and secondary to the expression of the *bhāva* of *bhakti* in their *kīrtanas*. The Vaisnava poets wanted a hardy, supple living language, a mother tongue with strong roots in the soil of everyday life, which could convey with force and vigour the flavour of the *līlās* of home, village, and forest performed by Shri Krsna the divine cowherd. They chose Braj Bhāṣā. The sixth of the reasons for the close connection of Braj Bhāṣā with Krsna-bhakti hinges on the wide-spread fame of the beautiful poetry created by Vaisnava poets in Braj Bhāṣā. The brilliant galaxy of poets—within which Sūradāsa and some of the other poets of the *Aṣṭāchāpa* school founded by Viṭṭhalānātha were stars of the very first magnitude—composing verses outstanding in poetic expression and full of sincere devotion to Shri Krsna attracted other poets who were devotees of Shri Krsna to employ Braj Bhāṣā. Finally, Braj Bhāṣā became the language considered most appropriate for hymns to Shri Krsna. Braj Bhāṣā acquired such prestige as the language of the devotional poetry centred on Shri Krsna that the dialect of literary Bengālī mingled with elements borrowed from Braj Bhāṣā which was used by many Bengālī Vaisnava poets was called ‘‘Brajabulī’’—the speech of Braj.

The high point of the literature in Braj Bhāṣā inspired by Krsna-bhakti came during the reigns of the Mugal emperors Akbar and Jahāngir which extended over the years from A.D. 1556 to 1630. But, by the middle of the seventeenth century, the situation had begun to change. No longer were *bhaktas* the most important poets of Braj Bhāṣā and no longer was *bhakti* the dominant theme of the literature produced in that language. From the latter part of the seventeenth century to the first decades of the nineteenth century, Braj Bhāṣā continued to be one of the leading literary languages of North India, but the powerful religious fervour that had animated the Braj Bhāṣā poetry of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries was gone. Instead of the devotional passion of the *bhaktas* of Shri Krsna, scholarly concern with the correct employment of poetic principles, devices, and embellishments came to be the primary motivation for the composition of Braj Bhāṣā literature—still mainly in verse, and *bhakti* sects like the *Sampradāya* of Vallabhācārya were replaced by wealthy landowners and minor princes as the most influential patrons of poets writing in Braj Bhāṣā. In the history of the literature of the dialects of Hindī, this period marked by interest in the application of the doctrines of classical Sanskrit poetics to Braj Bhāṣā literature is generally called the

Riti Kāla (Stylistic Period).¹ Although the predominant theme of *Riti Kāla* poetry in Braj Bhāṣā was the love of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa, this love was no longer the divine love that it had been for the *bhaktas*; it had become no more than a secular love—a *laukika* love—by the description of which poets could demonstrate their skill in the production of poetry in accord with the classical literary conventions.

Even though during the latter half of the nineteenth century, Khaḍibolī Hindī, modern standard Hindī, began to supplant Braj Bhāṣā as a literary language and as a cultural vehicle, poets continued to compose in Braj Bhāṣā. For example, Bhāratendu Harishcandra (A.D. 1850–1885)—whose family was associated with the Vallabha *Sampradāya*—was a Braj Bhāṣā poet as well as one of the most outstanding early writers of modern Khaḍiboli Hindī literature. Nor was Bhāratendu Harishcandra alone in writing good Braj Bhāṣā poetry in the late nineteenth century; Satya Nārāyaṇa (A.D. 1879–1937) and Bābū Jai Shankara (A.D. 1889–1937) also composed poetry in Braj Bhāṣā as well as literature in Khaḍibolī.² By the present day, Braj Bhāṣā has sunk through most of the area in which it is spoken to the level of a non-literary rural and household dialect completely overshadowed by Khaḍibolī Hindī, the official language not only of Uttar Pradesh and three other Indian states but of the whole Republic of India. Although attempts are periodically made to write novels and plays in Braj Bhāṣā, well-organized groups actively working for the restoration of Braj Bhāṣā to a position of greater cultural influence are limited to the city of Mathurā. To be sure, among the Vaiṣṇavas of western and northern India, Braj Bhāṣā still maintains its old prestige as the best language for the expression of *bhakti* to Shri Kṛṣṇa.

THE CAURASI VAISNAVAN KI VARTA

The four *vārtās* which have been translated as the second part of this study are all taken from the *Caurāsi Vaiṣṇavan ki Vārtā*, the most important prose text in the Braj Bhāṣā literature of the *Sampradāya* established by Vallabhācārya. By virtue of being written in Braj Bhāṣā—a language which is understandable to most members of the *Sampradāya*, the *Caurāsi Vaiṣṇavan ki Vārtā* has had a direct influence as a guide to the kind of attitudes to be fostered by followers of the teachings of Vallabhācārya

¹RAM AWADH DWIVEDI, *A Critical Survey of Hindi Literature* (Vārāṇasi: Motilal Banarsi-dass, 1966), pp. 88–94. For an interesting discussion of the different scholarly opinions on the relationship between the poetry inspired by the Vaiṣṇava *bhakti* movement and the poetry of the *Riti Kāla* see the following: JAGADĪSHA GUPTA, *Ritikālyā-Sangraha* (Allāhābād : Sāhitya Bhavana, 1961), pp. 40–47.

²For BHĀRATENDU HARISHCANDRA, see: VARMĀ, *Hindi Sāhitya Kosha*, vol. II, pp. 382–385. DWIVEDI, pp. 154–155, 161–162. For Satya Nārāyaṇa and Bābū Jai Shankara, see: DWIVEDI, pp. 178, 188–190.

that has been much greater than that of the *Subodhini*, *Aṇu Bhāṣya*, *Sodashagrantha*, and the other Sanskrit texts referred to in Part I above that were composed by Vallabhācārya himself. The technique of instruction employed in the *Caurāsi Vaiṣṇavan kī Vārtā* is that of the illustration of desirable qualities or ideals by episodes from the lives of the eighty-four (*caurāsi*) Vaiṣṇavas who were initiated into the practice of true *bhakti* by Vallabhācārya. The order in which the episodes of the lives of each of those eighty-four Vaiṣṇavas are arranged is not random, but is intended to trace carefully the progress of each of those Vaiṣṇavas from the *ādhibhautika* or *laukika* existence to entrance into relationship with Shri Kṛṣṇa through the *Brahmasambandha* initiation administered by Vallabhācārya and from that point on to the *ādhidaivika* state of the *alaukika* *lilā* of Shri Kṛṣṇa in Goloka. The effect of the arrangement of the episodes (called *prasangas*) is reinforced by the *bhāvaprakāsha* commentaries added by Harirāyaji. Thus, in the *Caurāsi Vaiṣṇavan kī Vārtā*, the follower of the teachings of Vallabhācārya has before him a guide to the transformation of the ever-changing, ignorant *laukika* state of mind to the permanent, changeless, knowing *alaukika* state of mind in which the *bhāva* of the *lilā* of Shri Kṛṣṇa can be experienced. For those who follow the teachings of Vallabhācārya, the *Caurāsi Vaiṣṇavan kī Vārtā* has, consequently, a very high place; in it can be seen the application of the teachings given for the practice of *bhakti* by Vallabhācārya. The people who follow the doctrines of Vallabhācārya use readings, both private and congregational, from the *Caurāsi Vaiṣṇavan kī Vārtā* as an important means of increasing their own *bhaktibhāva*, for those eighty-four Vaiṣṇavas who appear in the *Caurāsi Vaiṣṇavan kī Vārtā* expressed through their lives perfect *bhāva* of devotion to Shri Kṛṣṇa. The most influential of these eighty-four Vaiṣṇavas are, without doubt, the four poets—Sūradāsa, Kumbhanadāsa, Paramānandadāsa, and Kṛṣṇadāsa—who were the first four members of the *Aṣṭachāpa* school of Braj Bhāṣā poetry and of the *Aṣṭasakhā*, the eight eternal companions of Shri Kṛṣṇa.

The four *vārtās* that have been translated here are the *vārtās* of these four poets.

The *Caurāsi Vaiṣṇavan kī Vārtā* is also important in the history of Braj Bhāṣā literature since it is one of the earliest known texts in prose in that literature. The Braj Bhāṣā prose commentary, which was made about A.D. 1600 by Indrajit of Orchā, to the *Nītishatka* of Bhartrhari (the Braj Bhāṣā text has recently been edited and linguistically described by R. S. McGREGOR)¹ is probably a few decades older than the earliest

¹R. S. McGREGOR, *The Language of Indrajit of Orchā* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1968), pp. 17–239.

date that can be claimed for the *Caurāsi Vaiṣṇavan kī Vārtā*, but the *Caurāsi Vaiṣṇavan kī Vārtā* is still the oldest known prose text in the devotional literature of Braj Bhāṣā. The style in which the *Caurāsi Vaiṣṇavan kī Vārtā* is written is not difficult and is colloquial rather than literary in tone. Most of the *Caurāsi Vaiṣṇavan kī Vārtā* is in the form of narration in the third person, but there are also a great many passages in which direct conversation is transcribed.

According to the traditions of the Vallabhācārya *Sampradāya*, Gokulanātha, the fourth son of Viṭṭhalanātha, is the author of the *Caurāsi Vaiṣṇavan kī Vārtā*. Gokulanātha, who lived from A.D. 1552–1641, is supposed to have gathered up the traditions current in the *Sampradāya* about the eighty-four followers of his grandfather Vallabhācārya and about the two hundred and fifty-two followers of his father Viṭṭhalanātha and to have used them as examples in the course of his oral teachings on the practice of the *Puṣtimārga*. Towards the latter part of Gokulanātha's life these traditions were written down in Braj Bhāṣā, the language used in the *Sampradāya* for both spiritual instruction and the conduct of daily affairs. Later, Harirāyajī (A.D. 1591–1716) arranged the traditions (*vārtās*) which had been used by Gokulanātha into the *Caurāsi Vaiṣṇavan kī Vārtā* (the *vārtās* dealing with the followers of Vallabhācārya) and the *Dosau Bāvan Vaiṣṇavan kī Vārtā* (the *vārtās* dealing with the followers of Viṭṭhalanātha) and added to these collections commentaries called “*bhāvaprakāsha*” (i.e., explanations of the internal condition or emotional state of being of an individual or event). In these *bhāvaprakāshas*, which Harirāyajī himself composed on the basis of traditions in the *Sampradāya*, is given information by which the reader or listener can understand the significance of a *vārtā* or portion of a *vārtā*. Many of the *bhāvaprakāshas* supply information about the *ādhibhautika* lives of *bhaktas* before their initiation into Vallabhācārya's *Sampradāya* and about the *ādhidaivika* identities of the same *bhaktas* when they are in the divine *lilā* in Goloka. It is thus from the *bhāvaprakāshas* of Harirāyajī that most of the biographical information about the *bhaktas* who followed Vallabhācārya and Viṭṭhalanātha is obtained. Harirāyajī also added more material, also from the sectarian traditions, to the *vārtās* themselves. The form of the *Caurāsi Vaiṣṇavan kī Vārtā* has not changed since the time of Harirāyajī. The *Caurāsi Vaiṣṇavan kī Vārtā* is arranged into eighty-four *vārtās*, each *vārtā* being devoted to a different *bhakta*. Each *vārtā* is then divided into a variable number of *prasāngas* or episodes. The full title of the *Caurāsi Vaiṣṇavan kī Vārtā* when it contains the *bhāvaprakāshas* of Harirāyajī is *Caurāsi Vaiṣṇavan kī Vārtā, [Tīn Janma kī Lilā Bhāvanā-vālī]*; by this full title it is known that the accounts of all three lives—*ādhibhautika*, *ādhyātmika*, and *ādhidaivika*—of each Vaiṣṇava are given. Harirāyajī's ordering of the *Caurāsi Vaiṣṇavan kī Vārtā* is supposed to have been completed about A.D. 1696, toward the end of his life.¹

In addition to the *Caurāsi Vaiṣṇavan kī Vārtā*, there are several other collections of *vārtās* preserved in Braj Bhāṣā prose within Vallabhācārya's *Sampradāya*. The best known of these other collections of *vārtās* is the *Dosau Bāvan Vaiṣṇavan kī Vārtā* in which the *vārtās* of the two hundred and fifty-two (*dosau bāvan*) followers of Viṭṭhalanātha are given. Although the *Dosau Bāvan Vaiṣṇavan kī Vārtā* is usually held to be of the same age as the *Caurāsi Vaiṣṇavan kī Vārtā*—both works supposedly having been first composed from written and unwritten sectarian traditions by Gokulanātha, doubt has been cast on its antiquity on the basis of linguistic evidence.² The other collections of *vārtās* are as follows: the *Nijavārtā* and the *Shri Ācāryajī ke Prākātya kī Vārtā* both give accounts of the events of Vallabhācārya's life, the *Gharūvārtā* contains accounts of Viṭṭhalanātha's life, the *Baiṭhaka Cariṭra*, describes the events associated with Vallabhācārya's trips around India, the *Bhāvasindhu* gives further information about some of the followers of Vallabhācārya and his son Viṭṭhalanātha, and the *Shri Nāthajī ki Prākātya-Vārtā* gives an account of events in the history of the *Sampradāya* from the appearance of the *svarūpa* of Shri Govardhananāthajī on Govardhana Hill until the removal of Shri Govardhananāthajī from Govardhana to Nāthadvāra in Udaipur district, Rājasthān (A.D. 1672). In addition to these collections of *vārtās*, there are also *Nijavārtā* and *Baiṭhaka Cariṭra* (though where there are eighty-four *baiṭhakas* described for Vallabhācārya, there are only twenty-eight for Viṭṭhalanātha) for Viṭṭhalanātha.

THE DATES OF SURADASA, KUMBHANADASA, PARAMANANADADASA, AND KRSNADASA

Sūradāsa was born at Sīnhīn village in Gurgaon district of the modern state of Haryana, just south of Delhi, in A.D. 1479 (in the same month of the same year that Vallabhācārya was born). Sūradāsa was initiated by Vallabhācārya into the *Sampradāya* in 1511 at the age of thirty-two. He was the *sakhā* called Kṛṣṇa and the *sakhi* called Campakalatā. As a member of the *Aṣṭachāpa*, Sūradāsa sang *kirtana* before Shri Govardhananāthajī at the *utthāpana darshana* period (see p. 49 above); his particular interest was Shri Kṛṣṇa's *māna līlā* (in which Rādhā's jealousy has made her angry at Shri Kṛṣṇa). Sūradāsa died in 1584.

¹DVĀRAKĀDĀSA PARĪKHA and PRABHU DAYĀLA MĪTALA, *Sūra Nirnaya* (Mathurā : Sāhitya Sañsthāna, 1962), pp. 16–20. PREMANĀRĀYANA TĀNDANA (ed.), *Sūradāsa ki Vārtā* (Lucknow : Nandana Prakāshana, 1968), pp. 6–8.

²VARMĀ, *La Langue Braj*, p. 32.

³HARIHARANĀTHA TĀNDANA, *Vārtā-Sāhitya* (Aligarh : Bhārata Prakāshana Mandira, 1961), pp. 39–40.

Kumbhanadāsa was born in A.D. 1469 at Jamunāvatau (located near the town of Govardhan in Mathurā district, Uttar Pradesh); he was initiated by Vallabhācārya into the *Sampradāya* at the age of thirty-one in the year 1500. He was the *sakhā* Arjuna and the *sakhi* Vishākhā. He sang *kīrtana* at the *rājabhoga* period of *darshana* (see p. 48 his particular *līlā* was Shri Kṛṣṇa's *nikuñja līlā* (in which Shri Kṛṣṇa and Rādhā play together in the grove at night). Kumbhanadāsa died in 1584.

Paramānandadāsa was born in A.D. 1494 at Kannauj (Farrukhābād district, Uttar Pradesh) and was initiated by Vallabhācārya twenty-seven years later in 1521. He was Toṣa *sakhā* and Candrabhāgā *sakhi*. His *darshana* period was the *marigalā* (see p. 48 above) and he favoured *bāla līlā* (the *līlā* that Shri Kṛṣṇa performed in his childhoōd). Paramānanda-dāsa died in 1585.

Kṛṣṇadāsa was born in the village of Cilotarā (Ahmadābād district, Gujarāt) in the year A.D. 1497 and received his initiation from Vallabhācārya in 1512 at the age of fifteen. Kṛṣṇadāsa was Rṣabha *sakhā* and Lalitā *sakhi*. He sang *kīrtana* at the *shayana* period of *darshana* (see p. 49 above) and the *rāsa līlā* (in which Shri Kṛṣṇa dances with the *gopīs* in the forest) is his *līlā*. He managed the temple of Shri Govardhananāthajī. He died in 1580.¹

¹PRABHU DAYĀLA MĪTALA, *Braj ke Dharma-Sampradāyon ka Itihāsa* (Delhi: National Publishing House, 1968), p. 270.

The *Vārtā* of Sūradāsa

[The *vārtā* of Sūradāsa¹ opens with a *bhāvaprakāsha* in which Harirājī explains the *ādhidaivika* identity and *ādhibhautika* birth of Sūradāsa.]

[*Bhāvaprakāsha*

Now THE *bhāva*² of the *vārtā*³ of Sūradāsajī⁴ will be described.

¹HARIRĀJĪ, *Caurāśī Vaiṣṇavan kī Vārtā* [*Tīn Janma kī Līlā Bhāvanāvālī*], ed. DVĀRAKĀ-DĀSA PARĪKHA (Mathurā: Dvārakādāsa Parīkha, 1961), pp. 377–416.

²*Bhāva* is, for followers of the *bhaktimārga*, an emotional state, an inner orientation of attitude. Thus, Sūradāsa had within himself the *bhāva* of the *sakhā* of Shri Kṛṣṇa who was called Kṛṣṇasākhā so that he actually became that *sakhā*. Sūradāsa also developed the *bhāva* of the *sakhī* Compakalatā so that he became that *sakhī*. In the same way, other *bhaktas* may incorporate into themselves the *bhāva* of devotion to Shri Kṛṣṇa of a *gopi* in Braj or of Shri Kṛṣṇa's foster mother Yashodā. *Bhāva* is also the inner emotional attitude expressed by a *kirtana* or *vārtā* which is meant to arouse *bhakti* to Shri Kṛṣṇa in the hearts of readers or listeners. A very clear discussion of the concept of *bhāva* in Vaisnava thought is given in the following: EDWARD C. DIMOCK, *The Place of the Hidden Moon* (Chicago: University of Chicago press, 1966), pp. 20–25.

³The Braj Bhāṣā word “*vārtā*” comes from the Sanskrit term “*vārtā*”; the basic meaning of *vārtā* is “business”, “livelihood”, or “occupation”. The type of occupation denoted by *vārtā* was especially the ordinary, mundane agricultural and pastoral business of the Vaishyas—the common people who made up the lowest of the three Aryan *varṇas*—and not the glorious occupations of the Brāhmaṇas and Kshatriyas. Consequently, the secondary meanings of *vārtā* also refer to the commonplace; *vārtā*, for example, has the meaning of “information about something” and of “the act of transmitting information” but the information is no more than news, reports, or accounts and the transmission is simple, unrefined conversation. A *vārtā* in the epic and purāṇic literature is simply a story that is told without poetic pretensions. The Braj Bhāṣā *vārtās* the *Caurāśī Vaiṣṇavan kī Vārtā* are completely in accord with the spirit of the Sanskrit *vārtā*, for they are simple descriptions in colloquial prose and not in literary prose or verse of events in the lives of the followers of Vallabhācārya. The *vārtās* are intended to be only the vehicles by which the *bhāva* of those followers can be portrayed; there is no place in them for literary polish. It is in the Braj Bhāṣā poetry of the *Aṣṭachāpa* poets that literary polish has its important place. See the following for more information on the *vārtā*: MONIER MONIER-WILLIAMS, *A Sanskrit-English Dictionary*

Sūradāsajī, who was a *Sārasvata Brāhmaṇa*¹ from the village of Sīnhīn near Delhi,² was a *sevaka*³ of Shri Ācāryajī Mahāprabhu.⁴

Sūradāsajī is one of the eight companions (*Aṣṭasakhā*) of Shri Thākuraijī⁵ in *līlā* and in *līlā* he is called “Kṛṣṇasakhā”. Even though only *sakhīs* are allowed to take part in the *nikuñja līlā* (Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa’s *līlā* of love at night in the grove) and the *sakhās* are forbidden to witness that *līlā*, Sūradasajī has sung of the *nikuñja līlā* in such a way that he must have actually experienced it. The problem may be solved by reference to the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* where it is said that the *sakhās* always go with Shri Thākuraijī when he takes the cows out to graze; the *gopīs* also experience this *līlā* of pasturing the cows and they sing of it while remaining in their houses. After the *sakhās* and Shri Thākuraijī have returned home in the evening, Shri Thākuraijī, as soon as night has fallen, goes out with the *sakhīs* to perform the *nikuñja līlā*. Then the *sakhās*, who are intimate friends of Shri Thākuraijī, feel *viraha*⁶ and they sing songs of the *nikuñja līlā* and experience it. Each of the *sakhīs* in the grove has two forms:

(Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1960), p. 945. HARIHARANĀTHA TĀNDANA, *Vārtā-Sāhitya*, pp. 1–38.

⁴The honorific suffix “-jī” is added to the names of persons, divinities, cities, and geographical features that have special sanctity or are entitled to particular respect. The honorific prefix “shri” is also often added to the same kinds of names for the same reasons. In the translation, I have kept the honorific suffix and prefix with the names of persons, but not with the names of places.

¹Sūradāsa is also said to have been either a *Jāṭa* or *Dhāḍhi* by caste. See : PREMANĀRĀYĀNA TĀNDANA, *Sūradāsa ki Vārtā*, pp. 17–19.

²Sīnhīn is also called “Sīnhorā” and “Shergadha”. The village of Runakatā in Āgrā district, Uttar Pradesh, has also been said to be Sūradāsa’s birthplace. See : PREMANĀRĀYĀNA TĀNDANA, *Sūradāsa ki Vārtā*, pp. 17–19.

³The word *sevaka*, which literally means “servant”, is used in Vallabhācārya’s *Sampradāya* to mean “follower”, “devotee”, “disciple” either of a divinity or of a human guru.

⁴Vallabhācārya is usually referred to as “Shri Ācāryajī Mahāprabhu” within the *Sampradāya*. The title “ācārya” (which designates one who teaches something or who gives initiation into a sect or state of being) was given to Vallabha after his victory in the *śāstrārtha* at Vijayanagara; the title “Mahāprabhu” (which was originally a royal title meaning “great master” or “great lord”) seems to have been given to Vallabhācārya after his death by his son Viṭṭhalanātha. Viṭṭhalanātha may have applied the title to his father the example of the members of the Caitanya *Sampradāya* who used the same title for Kṛṣṇa Caitanya, the founder of their sect.

⁵Shri Thākuraijī, which means simply “the Lord” or “the Master”, is the most common term by which Shri Kṛṣṇa or any of his *svarūpas* are referred to in Vallabhācārya’s *Sampradāya*.

⁶*Viraha*, which refers to separation and especially to the separation of lovers which causes pain in the hearts of the lovers, is felt by the *sakhās* whenever they are apart from Shri Kṛṣṇa. See p. 91 of Part I above for a discussion of the importance of *viraha* to a follower of the *bhaktimārga*. See also : S. M. PANDEY and NORMAN ZIDE, “Sūrdās and his Krishna-bhakti”, *Krishna: Myths, Rites, and Attitudes*, ed. MILTON SINGER (Honolulu: East-West Center Press, 1966), pp. 191–192.

one of these two forms is the *sakhā* form and in the *sakhā* form the masculine *bhāva* of the daytime *līlā* may be experienced; the other form is the *sakhī* form, in it the feminine *bhāva* of the nocturnal *līlā* may be experienced. Just as there are *rcās* (a kind of Vedic verse that is feminine in gender) in the *Veda*, so there are *gopīs* (the terms “*gopī*” and “*sakhī*” are interchangeable) and just like the *mantras* (that part of the Vedic literature which contains the *rcā* verses; *mantra* is masculine in gender) in the *Veda* are the *sakhās*. The *gopīs* are not just women, though their husbands thought them to be no more than women. They are no longer of ordinary (*laukika*) substance just as rice that has been prepared as food can no longer be used as seed to sprout in the ground. The *līlā* that is *rasa* is always, everywhere one *rasa*¹ and the intimate *sakhās* of Shri Thākurajī are parts of Shri Thākurajī.² By means of the two forms—*sakhā* form and *sakhī* form—Shri Thākurajī performs the daytime and the nocturnal *līlās* and enjoys them. Sūradāsa is the manifestation of Kṛṣṇasakhā and Kṛṣṇasakhā’s second form for the *nikuñja līlā* is that of the *sakhī* Campukalatā. Thus, by the mercy of Shri Ācāryajī Mahāprabhu³ Sūradāsa would be able to experience all of the *līlās*.

One may wonder why, if Sūradāsa were in the divine *līlā*, he could not at once experience that *līlā*. In answer to this question of why Sūradāsa had to fall into delusion, it is said that when Shri Thākurajī became manifest on earth and performed *līlā* as if he were *laukika* in order to show his glory and so that the *laukika jīvas* might successfully reach the divine *līlā*, then the *bhaktas* of Shri Thākurajī also demonstrated the *alaukika* by performing *laukika līlā* in the world (*jagat*).⁴ For example, although Shri Rukminijī is the *svarūpa* (form) of the goddess Lakṣmī herself, she took birth and worshipped the goddess in order to get a husband. Furthermore, Shri Rukminijī sent a Brāhmaṇa to Shri Thākurajī to propose marriage.⁵ This was done for the sake of the manifestation

¹*Rasa* is the inexpressible delight which a *bhakta* feels when he is in the presence of Shri Kṛṣṇa.

²According to Vallabhācārya’s *Shuddhādvaita*, all that really exists is part of Shri Kṛṣṇa Parabrahman.

³It was by Vallabhācārya’s mercy that Sūradāsa would be able to experience all of the *līlās* because it was Vallabhācārya, who appeared to rescue the *daivī jīvas* from worldly birth, who revealed to Sūradāsa Sūradāsa’s true nature as a *sakhā* of Shri Kṛṣṇa. Furthermore, by administering the *Brahmasambandha* mantra to Sūradāsa, Vallabhācārya allowed him to resumē his place beside Shri Kṛṣṇa (in the *svarūpa* of Shri Govardhananāthajī). For the account of Vallabhācārya’s role in rescuing the *daivī jīvas*, see either of the following HARIRĀYAJĪ, p. I. DVĀRAKĀDĀSA PURUŠOTTAMA PARIKHA (ed.), *Prācina Vārtā-Sāhitya* (Kānkaroli Vidyāvibhāga, 1940; 3 volumes), vol. I, pp. 15–17.

⁴See the discussion of the terms *laukika* and *alaukika* on pp. 9–15 of Part I of this study.

⁵For the story of Rukmini and Kṛṣṇa see *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* X:52:25–36; an English translation of the passage is given in the following: VYASA, *The Srimad-Bhagavatam*, trans. J. M. Sanyal (Calcutta: Oriental Publishing Co., 1952; 5 vols.), vol. IV, pp. 222–223.

of *līlā* in the world. Another example can be seen in Kālīndijī, the daughter of the sun, who performed austerities in the Yamunā River and who told Arjuna that she would choose Shrī Thākurajī to be her husband. Later, she married Shrī Thākurajī. This was only *līlā*; Kālīndijī has always been and always will be Shrī Thākurajī's beloved.¹ In Braj Shrī Svāminījī and Shrī Thākurajī are together one form, but in order to perform *Braj-līlā*, Shrī Thākurajī appeared in King Nanda's house and Shrī Svāminījī² appeared in Bṛśabhbānaji's house. By various means, the two then managed to meet both in the night and in the day. This was in order to manifest *līlā* in the world; they always perform the same *rasa līlā*.

In this way, Sūradāsa became the *sevaka* of Shrī Ācāryajī and sang of the *līlā* of Bhagavān; in this way Shrī Ācāryajī's fame increased. Sūradāsa, who was blessed by Bhagavān, took refuge with Shrī Ācāryajī. Thus, Sūradāsa performed *līlā* in the world and showed the glory of Bhagavān. But before he was received by Bhagavān, Sūradāsa sang the songs of the *laukika jīvas*; for, when Sūradāsa appeared on earth, he did not know about *līlā*.

Sūradāsajī was born eight miles from the city of Delhi in the village of Sīnhīn, which was located on the spot where King Parīkṣita's son Janmejaya performed his snake sacrifice.³ Sūradāsajī was the fourth son born in the house of a poor Sārasvata Brāhmaṇa; unfortunately, Sūradāsajī was born with no eyes at all. In fact, Sūradāsajī did not even have eyelids; above his eye sockets were only eyebrows. When Sūradāsajī's father saw that his new son had no eyes, he became very sad. He wondered to himself why the Creator who had made him so poor had not sent this blind son to be born in some other house. Who, Sūradāsajī's father wondered in his misery, would take care of the sightless boy and who would guide him?

Because Sūradāsa was blind and a son who was blind was considered useless, everyone in Sūradāsa's family disliked him and none of the people in the family would talk to him. This was the condition of Sūradāsa's life until he reached the age of six years. At that time, it happened that a wealthy Kṣatriya of the village gave Sūradāsa's father a gift of two gold coins. This gift made Sūradāsa's father's heart fill with joy and he hurried home to tell his wife, his children, and his relatives that he had received a valuable windfall. He showed them the money and

¹Kālīndiji is the Yamunā River. See the following: PRABHU DAYĀLA MĪTALA, *Braj kā Sānskrktika Itihāsa* (Delhi: Rājakamala Prakāshana, 1966), p. 30.

²Kṛṣṇa's beloved *gopī* Rādhā is called "Shrī Svāminījī" (which means "the Mistress") by the followers of Vallabhācārya.

³For the story of Janmejaya's snake sacrifice, see the following: KRISHNA-DWAIPAYANA VYASA, *The Mahabharata*, trans. Pratap C. Roy (Calcutta: Oriental Publishing Co., undated, 12 volumes), vol. I (*Adi Parva*), section III, pp. 36-48.

said that he would take the gold coins on the following day and buy enough provisions to support the household for three or four months. Then he wrapped the coins up in a cloth and put them in a niche in the wall. During night, while the household was asleep, a rat came and picked up the coins and hid them in a hole in the roof of the house. When, in the morning, Sūradāsa's father went to get the coins, he discovered that they were missing. Sūradāsa's parents were struck with grief and they began to cry and beat their chests. They were unable either to eat or to drink all that day. Sūradāsajī heard his parents moaning in their sorrow and asked them why they were making such pitiful lamentation. "Remember to worship Bhagavān," Sūradāsa told them, "and everything will be all right."

As soon as Sūradāsajī had said this, his parents began to berate him. "From the moment that you were born blind until this very day, we have known nothing but misfortune. In all that time we have never had a day of happiness and we have never had food with which to fill our stomachs. Shrī Bhagavān gave us two gold coins and now they are gone."

In reply to this, Sūradāsajī said, "If you promise not to keep me in this house, I will tell you where your gold coins are. But you must not keep me in this house and you must not follow me when I leave."

When Sūradāsajī's parents had heard this, they answered, "Of what use are you to us? Help us find our gold coins and you may go wherever you wish. We will not detain you."

Then Sūrdāsa said that the gold coins would be found in a hole in the roof of the house. Sūradāsa's father looked into the hole and found the coins. As soon as the coins had been found, Sūradāsajī prepared to leave the house. But Sūrdāsa's parents had realized that Sūradāsa's ability to find the coins so quickly showed that he had very valuable talents.

Sūradāsa's parents called out, "Sūradāsa! Why are you leaving home? The coins have been found and we can buy food. Stay and eat and then you can go wherever you want."

But Sūradāsa answered, "You must not try to make me stay home. If you force me to stay, then your money will vanish again and you will be sorry." Sūradāsajī's parents had no reply to this, so Sūradāsa took up his stick and left the house.

Sūradāsajī left Sīnhīn and proceeded down the road for about eight miles until he came to a pond on the outskirts of a village. Sūradāsajī sat down in the shade of a *pīpala* tree on the edge of the pond and quenched his thirst with some water from the pond. Sūradāsajī had been sitting beside the pond for an hour or two when a Brāhmaṇa zamindār (landlord) recognized him and came over to him. The zamindār told Sūradāsa that ten of his cows had been lost for three days and that he intended to

reward anyone who could find the missing animals with a gift of two cows.

"What use would I have for cows?" said Sūradāsajī to the zamīndār. "But, since you have asked me, I will tell you where your cows are. About two miles from here there is another village. At night some henchmen of the zamīndār of that village came here and stole your cattle. That zamīndār has a house inside of which a second house has been constructed. The zamīndār keeps his horses tied up in the inner house and your cows are tied up with the horses."

The zamīndār took ten of his men and went to the house of the other zamīndār where he found his ten cows tied up with the horses. The zamīndār then returned to Sūradāsa and said to him, "Sūradāsa! I have found my cows just where you said that I would find them, so now two of the cows are yours."

But Sūradāsajī answered, "I have left my home and taken refuge with Shri Thākurajī, how can I accept any cows from you?"

Then the zamīndār began giving Sūradāsa words of advice as if Sūradāsa were only a child. "You are the son of a Sārasvata Brāhmaṇa," he said to him, "and you have no eyes. You don't even have a man with you to be your guide. Why did you leave your home and come here to sulk? You are blind, how will you survive?"

In reply, Sūradāsa said, "I did not leave home to rely upon you, I left home to rely upon Nārāyaṇa¹ and Nārāyaṇa, who protects the entire world, will watch over me. Whatever is destined to happen will happen."

The zamīndār then said, "I am also a Brāhmaṇa, let me bring you something to eat from my house." Sūradāsa, who had not eaten since he set out from his house, accepted the zamīndār's offer. The zamīndār went to his house and had *pūris*² prepared and sent to Sūradāsa along with milk and water. The zamīndār told Sūradāsa that he would never suffer any want for he would share all the food that might come to him with him. The zamīndār promised to bring food to Sūradāsa every day in the morning either at the pond or in the village wherever Sūradāsa should want it.

The next morning the zamīndār came to Sūradāsa and asked him where he intended to dwell. Sūradāsa said that he had decided to remain for several days under the *pīpala* tree by the side of the pond. Then the zamīndār had a hut built at that place for Sūradāsa and sent a servant to wait on Sūradāsa. The zamīndār then announced before several people that Sūradāsa was very wise and had been able to tell him where to find his lost cows. The zamīndār told the people that Sūradāsa had the power of divination and that he had had a hut built under the *pīpala* tree at the

¹ Nārāyaṇa is one of the names that Vaiṣṇavas use for the Supreme Being.

² A kind of unleavened whole-wheat bread that is deep-fried in cooking oil is called a *pūri*.

edge of the pond for his use, that he was giving him a servant, and that he was supplying him with *pūrīs*, yoghurt, and milk every day. The zamīndār finished by inviting those in need of divination to go to Sūradāsa for help.

When the people heard about Sūradāsa, they all came out of the village to see him. Sūradāsa prophesied for anyone who requested his help. The crowds of people increased and Sūradāsa was treated with great reverence and was given many gifts of food and drink. After a few days, Sūradāsa was given a large house at the pond in place of the hut. People gave Sūradāsa clothing, money, and great wealth; they began to call him *Svāmī* and many men became his followers (*sevaka*). Sūradāsa used to recite *padas* of *viraha* to his followers; he assembled a large number of musical instruments to accompany the singing. In this way, Sūradāsa reached his eighteenth year under the *pīpala* tree by the pond.

One night, while Sūradāsajī was sleeping, a feeling of desire to renounce the world (*vairāgya*) came upon him. He thought to himself, "I left home and renounced the worldly life in order to find Shri Bhagavān¹ but Māyā has seized me here.² Why should I increase my own fame? I should be trying to further the Lord's glory. In working for my own glory, I have really been hurting myself. In the morning I will leave all of this."

At dawn, Sūradāsa sent one of his disciples to summon his parents. When they came, he gave the house and everything that he had acquired to them. Then Sūradāsa dressed, took up his stick, and departed. Those of Sūradāsa's followers who were in the jungle of *Māyā* stayed behind entangled in *samsāra*³ and those who were not under the influence of *samsāra* went away with Sūradāsa. Sūradāsa decided that he would go to Braj since Braj was the homeland of Shri Bhagavān. After a time, he entered Braj and arrived at the Vishrānta Ghāṭa⁴ in the city of Mathurā.⁵ But Sūradāsa decided that it would not be proper for him to remain in Mathurā for if he were to stay there, his fame would be bound to become great. All fame, however, should be Shri Kṛṣṇa's in Shri Kṛṣṇa's own city of Mathurā; besides, Sūradāsa realized that many people would come to him for help with the troubles of *samsāra* and the renown that would result for him would cause unhappiness for the *Caube*

¹Shri Bhagavān is a commonly-used title for Shri Kṛṣṇa.

²Māyā is Shri Kṛṣṇa's power of cosmic delusion.

³See pp. 70–71 of Part I above for a discussion of the concept of *samsāra* in Vallabhācārya's thought.

⁴For further information on Vishrānta Ghāṭa (also called Vishrāma Ghāṭa), the chief ghāṭa at Mathurā, see the following: MĪTĀLA, *Brajā Sāṃskṛtika Itihāsa*, pp. 149–151.

⁵In the text Mathurā, like all Vaiṣṇava holy places, is called "Shri Mathurājī" and, in the same way, the Yamunā River is called "Shri Yamunājī". Secular cities like Āgrā, however, are not given the honorific affixes. See also p. 106, n. 4 above.

Brāhmaṇas who lived by ministering to the spiritual and supernatural needs of the people of Mathurā. After careful consideration in this manner, Sūradāsa left Mathurā and went to Gaughāṭa¹ on the Yamunā River midway between Mathurā and Āgrā and settled there.

Sūradāsa had a very beautiful voice and was highly skilled in musical matters and in divining. Many people came to Sūradāsa at Gaughāṭa and many became his followers. Sūradāsa became very famous in the world.]

[At this point begin the *prasāngas* of Sūradāsa's *vārtā* that were collected by Gokulanātha.]

Prasāṅga 1

Sūradāsa was living at Gaughāṭa when, one day, Shri Ācāryajī Mahāprabhu arrived from Adela² in Braj. After a few days, Shri Ācāryajī together with a large company of his disciples came to Gaughāṭa and bathed there in the Yamunā. After they had bathed and performed the evening worship, Shri Ācāryajī and his followers began to cook their evening meal. At that time, one of Sūradāsa's followers saw the famous teacher and his group and went to Sūradāsa and gave him the news that Shri Vallabhācāryajī, who had upheld the *bhaktimārga* and defeated the adherents of the *Māyāvāda* in South India and in Kāsi,³ had arrived. When Sūradāsa had heard this, he instructed one of his followers to inform him as soon as Shri Vallabhācāryajī had eaten and had seated himself at leisure to grant audience so that he could go to have *darshana*⁴ of the famous teacher. Sūradāsa's follower then went to Shri Ācāryajī's camp and sat down to watch from a distance. As soon as Shri Ācāryajī had finished his supper and had seated himself in the midst of his disciples, Sūradāsa's follower went back and told him as he had been ordered to do. Then Sūradāsa took all of his followers and went to have *darshana* of Shri Ācāryajī. Sūradāsa prostrated himself before Shri Ācāryajī.

Then, Shri Ācāryajī said from his holy mouth, "Sūra ! Describe some of the glory of Bhagavān."

In obedience to Shri Ācāryajī's order, Sūradāsa sang two *padas* in which he humbled himself as a lowly sinner before Shri Krṣṇa. When

¹ Gaughāṭa is located in present-day Āgrā district, Uttar Pradesh.

² Adela (also written "Adaila" or, in the English spelling, "Arail") was the village in which Vallabhācārya had his main house. Adela is located on the south bank of the Yamunā River, at its point of junction with the Gangā, across from the city of Allāhbād. For the exact location, see : *The Imperial Gazetteer of India : Atlas* (26 vols.; Oxford : Clarendon Press, 1931), XXVI, plate 64.

Kāsi (or Kāshī) is another name for the city of Vārāṇasi. The defeat of the *Māyāvādis* in South India mentioned here is probably a reference to the victory of Vallabhācārya at Vijayanagara which is described in pp. 43–46 of Part I above.

⁴ *Darshana* is the formal presentation of an outstanding person or of a divinity or sacred place to the view of an assembly of people. *Darshana* is also a formal audience granted by a famous person to one or more individuals. See : MONIER-WILLIAMS, pp. 470–471

Shrī Ācāryajī had heard these two *padas*, he asked Sūradāsa why he had depreciated himself so much and asked him to describe something of the *līlā* of Bhagavān.¹

[In a *bhāvaprakāsha* at this point in the text Harirāyaji explains that one who is separated from Bhagavān has become corrupted (which is the way that Sūradāsa had sung of himself in the *padas*) and can be made pure by singing of the *līlā* of Bhagavān; consequently, Shrī Ācāryajī asked Sūradāsa to sing of the divine *līlā*.]

But Sūradāsa answered, “Mahārāja!² I don’t know anything about the *līlā* of Bhagavān.”

Then Shrī Ācāryajī told Sūradāsa to go and bathe in the Yamunā and then return and receive instruction in the divine *līlā*. With great joy Sūradāsa did so and, without allowing anyone to touch him, returned to Shrī Ācāryajī.³ Then Shrī Ācāryajī had mercy on Sūradāsa and told him the divine name and had him dedicate himself to Shrī Kṛṣṇa. After Sūradāsa had thus been initiated, Shrī Ācāryajī recited the *Bhāgavata-Purāṇa-Dashamaskandhānukramaṇikā* to Sūradāsa.⁴

[*Bhāvaprakāsha*

By telling the eight-syllabled mantra⁵ to Sūradāsa, Vallabhācāryajī caused the impurities (*doṣa*)⁶ that Sūradāsa had acquired through birth to be obliterated and brought him through the first seven steps of the practice of *bhakti*.⁷ When Shrī Ācāryajī then had Sūradāsa dedicate himself to Shrī Kṛṣṇa by the rite of the *Brahmasambandha*, Sūradāsa reached the last two steps of the nine-fold *bhakti* by which he gave himself to Shrī Kṛṣṇa and was accepted by Shrī Kṛṣṇa.⁷ There

¹For background information on the relationship between Sūradāsa’s composition of these *padas* and his membership in Vallabhācārya’s *Sampradāya*, see: PREMANĀRĀYĀNA TĀNDANA, *Sūradāsa kī Vārtā*, pp. 31–32.

²Brāhmaṇas and sādhus are addressed with the title “Mahārāja” in India.

³A candidate for sacred instruction and initiation must be pure and unpolluted.

⁴The *Bhāgavata-Purāṇa-Dashamaskandhānukramaṇikā* is a Sanskrit composition by Vallabhācārya on the tenth *skandha* of the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* and is held to contain the essence of the tenth *skandha*. See: PREMANĀRĀYĀNA TĀNDANA, *Sūradāsa kī Vārtā*, p. 34,

⁵When one receives the eight-syllabled mantra—*Śrī Kṛṣṇah sharaṇam mama*, he is said to have received the divine name and is admitted into the Vallabhiā *Sampradāya*. This is the *Brahmasambandha* initiation by which one’s sins are destroyed. See pp. 18–20 of Part I above.

⁶The seven steps are: *shravaṇa*, *kirtana*, *smaraṇa*, *pāda-sevana*, *arcana*, *vandana*, and *dāsyā*. For an explanation of each, see pp. 83–84 of Part I of this study.

⁷The last two steps are *sakhya* and *ātmanivedana*; by the first of these one is accepted by Shri Kṛṣṇa as his *sakhā* (companion) and by the second one gives himself completely to Shri Kṛṣṇa. One must be accepted by Shri Kṛṣṇa before one can offer oneself to him, for everything must be done by the grace of Shri Kṛṣṇa and not by any effort that one does himself. See pp. 84–85 of Part I of this study.

remained then only the *bhakti* characterized by pure love; Sūradāsa reached this *bhakti* of love (*prema*) when Shrī Ācāryajī recited the *Bhāgavata-Purāṇa-Dashamaskandhānukramaṇikā* to him.¹ Then the entire *līlā* of Shrī Kṛṣṇa was firmly fixed in Sūradāsa's heart and he attained the *bhakti* of pure love.]

When Shrī Ācāryajī had implanted the knowledge of the entire *Subodhinī*² in Sūradāsa's heart, then Sūradāsa was able to describe the glory of the *līlā* of Bhagavān Shrī Kṛṣṇa. By means of the *Bhāgavata-Purāṇa-Dashamaskandhānukramaṇikā*, the entire *līlā* was manifested in Sūradāsa's heart. That this was so was proven by Sūradāsa's ability to express in his Braj Bhāṣā *padas* the spirit of Shrī Ācāryajī's Sanskrit verses from the *Subodhinī* commentary on the tenth book of the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*. Shrī Ācāryajī became very pleased when he heard the *padas* that demonstrated the presence of all of the *līlās* contained in the *Subodhinī* in Sūradāsa's heart. Shrī Ācāryajī knew that Sūradāsa had an understanding of *līlā*. Shrī Ācāryajī then told Sūradāsa to sing some *padas* describing the *līlā* that took place in the house of Shrī Kṛṣṇa's foster father King Nanda. As Shrī Ācāryajī listened, Sūradāsa sang beautiful verses describing the house of King Nanda. But, when Sūradāsa started to sing of the *līlā* that occurred in the houses of the *gopīs*, Shrī Ācāryajī made him stop.

[In a *bhāvaprakāsha* at this point in the text it is said that Shrī Ācāryajī stopped Sūradāsa from singing about the *gopīs* because such description may be heard only by those who have received proper initiation into the practice of *bhakti* (Sūradāsa himself had just received such initiation from Shrī Ācāryajī, but Sūradāsa's followers had not been initiated and so were ineligible to hear the description of the love of the *gopīs*).³] According to the *bhāvaprakāsha*, Sūradāsa then became troubled about the followers whom he had gathered around himself, for they had not been taken into the spiritual protection of Shrī Ācāryajī. Shrī Ācāryajī allayed Sūradāsa's worries by quoting one of Sūradāsa's own lines of verse: "Listen Sūra! this is the (blissful) condition of all those who worship the feet of Hari."⁴ By this line Shrī Ācāryajī meant that all those who have devoted

¹The *bhakti* which is pure love (*prema*) is the highest *bhakti* that the *jīva* can express. *Prema bhakti* is completely selfless love for, and attachment to, Bhagavān.

²The *Subodhinī* is the name of Vallabhācārya's famous commentary on the first, second, third, tenth, and-eleventh books (*skandha*) of the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*. See : PREMANĀRĀYAÑA TĀNDANA, *Sūradāsa ki Vārtā*, p. 34. SURENDRANATH DASGUPTA, *A History of Indian Philosophy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 5 volumes, 1961), vol. IV, p. 373.

³PREMANĀRĀYAÑA TĀNDANA, *Sūradāsa ki Vārtā*, pp. 38-39.

⁴Hari is one of the names of Shrī Kṛṣṇa.

themselves to Shri Krsna have put themselves completely into Shri Krsna's power and no longer need suffer any anxiety.^{1]}

Shri Acaryajī was so delighted by Sūradāsa's verses about the *lilā* in King Nanda's house that he said: "It seems as if Sūradāsa were actually present during the *lilā* that took place in Nanda's house." After Sūradāsa had finished reciting his verses, Shri Acaryajī gave oral instruction in the *Puruṣottama Sahasranāma* to Sūradāsa.² Sūradāsa's heart was filled with all of the *lilā* of the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* and he composed *kīrtanas* describing the *dāna līlā* and the *māna līlā* and all the other *līlās*³ contained in the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*, from the first *skandha* to the twelfth and last *skandha*.⁴

During the three days that Shri Acaryaji spent at Gaughāta, Sūradāsa had all of his own followers receive initiation from Shri Acaryajī. Then Shri Acaryajī left for Braj and Sūradāsa went with him. When Shri Acaryajī and Sūradāsa entered Braj, they went, first of all, to Gokula⁵ and when they reached Gokula Shri Acaryajī Mahāprabhu told Sūradāsa to have *darshana* of Gokula.⁶ Sūradāsa then threw himself on the ground in homage to the holy land of Gokula. While Sūradāsa was performing his obeisance to Gokula, his heart became full of the *līlā* that Shri Krsna

¹ See, for example, verse 8 of Vallabhācārya's "Navaratnam" (one of the treatises in the *Sodashagrantha*):

Whenever anxiety should arise in one's mind, then one
must realize that everything that occurs is part of
the *līlā* of Hari and immediately abandon all such worry.

The Sanskrit text of the above verse may be found at: *SITĀRĀMA CATARVEDĪ, Mahāprabhu Shrimadvallabhācārya aur Puṣṭi-Mārga* (Vārāṇasi: Hindi-Sāhitya-Kuṭīra, 1967), p. 295.

² The *Puruṣottama Sahasranāma* is a Sanskrit work by Vallabhācārya in which the thousand names of Shri Krsna in the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* are listed. According to Premanārāyaṇa Ṭāḍāna, the *Puruṣottama Sahasranāma* was completed about A.D. 1524 while Sūradāsa was initiated into Vallabhācārya's *Sampradāya* in A.D. 1511; therefore, the work must have been transmitted to Sūradāsa at the time of his initiation in partial or in outline form. See: PREMANĀRĀYAÑA ṬĀḌĀNA, *Sūradāsa ki Vārtā*, p. 39.

³ *Dāna līlā* is the *līlā* in which the boy Krsna forced the *gopis* to give him a share of their milk and butter as a "toll". *Māna līlā* (see p. 103 above) is the *līlā* in which Rādhā, because of jealousy, was angry at Shri Krsna.

⁴ The collection of all of Sūradāsa's *kīrtanas* based on the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* is the *Sūra-*
sāgara (see pp. 3-6 of Part I of this study).

⁵ See note 2 on p. 17 in Part I above. Gokula here may be either the present village of Mahābana (Old Gokula), or the site of the present village of Gokula (which was founded by Vallabhācārya's son Viṭṭhalanātha as described on p. 54 in Part I), or to the general vicinity of Mahābana-Gokula where King Nanda's cowherds wandered with their cattle while Shri Krsna was in the earthly Braj.

⁶ Some editions of the *Vārtā* of Sūradāsa begin the second *prasaṅga* of the *Vārtā* here with the story of Sūradāsa's entry into Braj with Vallabhācārya. The edition of Dvārakādāsa Parīkha, which is the edition followed here, however, includes this story in the first *prasaṅga*.

had performed as a child in Gokula. As he was wondering how best to describe the *līlā* that had been acted out in Gokula, it occurred to Sūradāsa that Shri Ācāryajī was deeply attached (*āsakta*)¹ to the divine *svarūpa*² called Shri Navanītapriyaji³ and so he sang a *kīrtana* about Shri Kṛṣṇa's child-*līlā* (*bāla-līlā*) as Navanītapriyaji in Gokula. When Shri Ācāryajī had heard these *padas*, he was very pleased with Sūradāsa.

Shri Ācāryajī had already arranged for the construction of a temple for Shri Govardhananāthaji⁴ and for a beautiful *sevā*⁵ for that *svarūpa*, but no define plan for a splendid programme of *kīrtana* before the *svarūpa* had yet been made. It seemed to Shri Ācāryajī that Sūradāsa should be kept by Shri Nāthajī in order to sing the *kīrtanas* describing all of the divine *līlās*. Shri Ācāryajī felt that the Vaiṣṇavas would derive great spiritual benefit from singing the *padas* composed by Sūradāsa. With these thoughts in mind, Shri Ācāryajī took Sūradāsa and went to Govardhana. First, Shri Ācāryajī went up the sacred hill and had *darshana* of Shri Nāthajī and then he told Sūradāsa to have *darshana* of Shri Govardhananāthaji and to sing *kīrtana* before the *svarūpa*.

As soon as Sūradāsa had sung a *pada* of humble salutation before Shri Nāthajī, Shri Ācāryajī said: "Sūradāsa! Now your mind is free of all ignorance (*avidyā*), for Shri Nāthajī has dispelled your former ignorance. Therefore, you must sing of the *līlā* of Bhagavān in which there is

¹The state of *āsakti*, which is explained in detail on p. 92 of Part I of this study, is an advanced level of loving attachment to Shri Kṛṣṇa.

²A *svarūpa* in the Vallabha *Sampradāya* is an actual form of Shri Kṛṣṇa. It has a material form but is a manifestation of the divine identity and not a lifeless image. See pp. 48–49 of Part I above.

³"Navanīta" means "fresh butter" in both Sanskrit and Braj Bhāṣā, and "priya" means "one who is fond of"; Navanītpriya thus means "one who is fond of fresh butter". As a child, Shri Kṛṣṇa liked milk and butter very much and often stole those foods mischievously from the *gopis* of Braj; Shri Navanītpriyaji is the *svarūpa* of Shri Kṛṣṇa as he was as a child fond of butter. This *svarūpa* is one of the nine primary *svarūpas* of the Vallabha *Sampradāya*. It was given by Viṭṭhalanātha to his eldest son, Giridhara, and is today still in the hands of that son's descendants at Nāthadvāra in Udaipur district, Rājasthān. See: MĪTALA, *Braj ke Dharm-Sampradāyon kā Itihāsa*, p. 276. A picture of Navanītpriyaji may be seen facing p. 100 in [KARSANDAS MULJI], *History of the Sect of Mahārājas or Vallabhāchāryas in Western India* (London: Trübner and Co., 1865).

⁴Shri Govardhananātha is the chief divine *svarūpa* of the Vallabha *Sampradāya*; it is kept by the descendants of Giridhara in a large temple at Nāthadvāra. It is the *svarūpa* of Shri Kṛṣṇa in the act of supporting Govardhana Hill over the *gopas* and *gopis* of Braj as shelter from Indra's rains. The *svarūpa* is holding the hill up with its left hand and is holding lotus stalks in the clenched fist of its right hand behind its back (the hearts of Shri Govardhananāthaji's devotees are said to be in that closed fist). Shri Govardhananāthaji's name, which means "Lord of Govardhana" is often abbreviated to "Shri Nāthaji"—the Lord. See pp. 21–22 of Part I above, and MĪTALA, *Braj ke Dharm-Sampradāyon kā Itihāsa*, plate facing p. 236.

⁵See pp. 46–52 of Part I of this study.

love (*sneha*) filled with divine majesty (*māhātmya*).

[*Bhāvaprakāsha*

Those who belong to Bhagavān (*Bhagavadiya*)¹ speak of themselves very humbly as did Sūradāsa in his *pada* of salutation to Shri Nāthaji; such humility is the trait of a *Bhagavadiya*. Anyone who speaks highly of himself and praises himself is one who has turned away from Bhagavān.]²

Shri Ācāryajī was delighted by the *kirtana* in which divine majesty was joined with love which Sūradāsa sang before Shri Govardhananāthajī. [In a *bhāvaprakāsha* at this point, Harirāyaji explains the nature of love joined with divine majesty. Sūradāsajī sang his *kirtana* in accordance with the principles of the *Puṣṭimārga*³ revealed by Shri Ācāryajī. The *jīva*, at first, must, in order that fear of committing offenses against Shri Bhagavān may not be lost, maintain an awareness of the divine majesty (*māhātmya*) as a part of his love for Shri Kṛṣṇa. Shri Bhagavān's majesty is, however, no barrier for the love of a perfect *bhakta*. For example, Shri Kṛṣṇa placed himself (as a child) in the control of the *bhaktas* of Braj because of their complete absorption in love for him. It is only in love for Shri Bhagavān that is as pure as that of the *bhaktas* of ancient Braj that awareness of the divine majesty does not enter; the ability to experience and to express such love is given only by divine grace. In the course of his Braj *līlā*, Shri Kṛṣṇa showed his awesome majesty many times—as when he destroyed terrible demons like Pūtanā and Bakāsura. But, Shri Yashodājī and the *bhaktas* of Braj felt such perfect love for Shri Kṛṣṇa that this display of divine majesty did not affect them; Shri Kṛṣṇa generally conceals his divine majesty from *bhaktas* like those out of the grace which he has had on them.

On the other hand, that individual who loves in the *laukika* (worldly) fashion his spouse, his children, his relatives, his wealth, and the welfare of his own body has forgotten the majesty of Bhagavān and is an offender

¹There is a distinction made in Vallabhācārya's *Sampradāya* between *Bhagavadiya* Vaiṣṇavas and the ordinary *sevakas* of Vallabhācārya. The *Bhagavadiyas*, who are the most advanced *bhaktas*, act always with regard for the happiness and comfort of the *guru* while the *sevakas* obey the commands of the *guru* without concern for the comfort or discomfort of the *guru*. The distinction is really between the *maryādā* approach in which one acts in harmony with rules and laws and the pure *Puṣṭimārgi* approach—which is followed by the *Bhagavadiyas*—in which one acts in harmony with selfless devotion to the divine even when such action may be contrary to laws. See : PREMANĀRĀYANA TĀNDANA, *Sūradāsa ki Vārtā*, p. 42.

²See pp. 16–19 and 80–82 of Part I above for a discussion of the problem of human pride and the antidote which Vallabhācārya offered to cure such pride.

³See pp. 80–93 of Part I above.

against the Divine Being. Consequently, it is the rule of the *mārga* shown by Shri Ācāryajī that one should do *sevā* in awe of Shri Bhagavān and in keeping with the regulations of the *Veda* and of the sacred laws (*maryādā*). Such behaviour is love filled with divine majesty.]

Then Shri Ācāryajī said to Sūradāsa, "Sūra! the tenets of the *Puṣṭi-mārga* have borne fruit for you; you must remain here and produce *kirtana* continually for Shri Govardhanadhara."¹

At that time, the *shayana* food offering² had just been made ; Sūradāsa sang a *kirtana* of the *māna-lilā*. Afterwards, every day Sūradāsa composed *kirtanas* for each of the periods of *darshana* from the awakening of Shri Nāthaji in the early morning until the *shayana darshana* in the evening. Sūradāsa's *kirtanas* numbered in the thousands.

Prasāṅga 2³

Once, while walking along a road, Sūradāsa, in the company of six or seven Vaiṣṇavas, came across a group of several men intent upon a game of *caupada*.⁴ With regard to these men who were so absorbed in playing their game that they took no notice of those who were passing to and fro on the road, Sūradāsa said to his companions: "See how these people squander their human births aimlessly. Although Shri Bhagavān has given us human bodies so that we may worship him, so many of us struggle through life in vain. There is no *laukika* advantage from this game of *caupada*, since it is considered a waste of time in the world, and, since it turns one's attention away from Bhagavān, no benefits may be reaped from it for the other world. But those to whom Bhagavān has given a human body have to play *caupada*."

After he had spoken in this way to the Vaiṣṇavas, Sūradāsa sang a *pada* on the subject of *caupada*. The Vaiṣṇavas, however, did not understand the meaning of the *pada* and asked Sūradāsa to explain it. Sūradāsa's explanation was as follows :

"Three things are necessary for the playing of *caupada* : understanding, thought, and contemplation ; these three things are also necessary in order to worship Bhagavān. Just as one must first understand the rules of *caupada* and only then be able to play the game, so does one have to know Bhagavān in order to worship him. Furthermore, in playing *caupada* one must think carefully about the various schemes by which he may win and, in the same way, the *jīva* has to carefully consider the nature of time

¹Shri Govardhanadhara ("the Bearer of Govardhana Hill") is another name of Shri Govardhananāthaji.

²See p. 49 of Part I above.

³This is *prasāṅga 3* in some editions of the *Vārtā*.

⁴*Caupada*, also called *Causara*, is a board game something like pachisi. Each player has four or five playing pieces, each player's pieces being of one colour, which he moves according to the numbers on three dice. *Caupada* players sometimes gamble on their games.

(*kāla*)¹ and then take refuge with Prabhu.² Finally, just as a *caupada* player contemplates before he moves his piece in order that he might avoid losing his piece to the tricks of his opponent, so a Vaiṣṇava must contemplate whether or not the action that he is doing is good or bad so that he may set aside wrong actions and behave in harmony with the righteous *dharma*. Therefore, I sang in my *pada*—O Mind, understanding, thought, and contemplation (are necessary)."

Sūradāsa continued his explanation of his verses in the following words : "Moreover, just as a *caupada* player who has been beaten by his opponent will cry out, so does one who relies upon scriptural study in the world say, as he recites aloud from the *Veda* and the *Purāṇas*, 'Bhagavān is very difficult to attain without *bhakti* and one must make hundreds of thousands of attempts.' That is what I meant in the second line of my poem when I said—One who recites from the scriptures says that without *bhakti* Bhagavān is very difficult to attain. And, just as when two *caupada* players meet they can play *caupada*, so when *Bhagavadiya* Vaiṣṇavas gather together to celebrate devotion to Bhagavān then *bhakti* increases. Furthermore, a *caupada* player never forgets the wager that he has made because he is anxious to win it; in the same way, the *jīva* keeps himself blissfully intent on the *vārtās* of Bhagavān and repeats again and again the essence of *rasa* (which is the divine name). And, when one has played well in *caupada* and one's piece has been able to move into the home circle, then there is no longer any danger that that piece will be captured; similarly, a human being who has successfully crossed over *samsāra* and obtained the goal of asylum with Bhagavān is free of *samsāra*.³ And, when I said—Leave the seventeen and listen to the eighteen, I was referring to the number of *Purāṇas* in the world (orthodox Hindus accept eighteen major *Purāṇas*) and to the fact that eighteen is a large bet in *caupada*; all eighteen *Purāṇas* are contained in one *Purāṇa*, the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*. By listening to the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*, one obtains the benefit of listening to the other seventeen *Purāṇas*."

Sūradāsa finished his interpretation of his own poem in the following words : "In the scriptures it is said that, 'The moth is killed by the sense of sight which leads it into the flame, the elephant is killed through its sense of touch, the deer is slain through its sense of hearing, the wasp is killed through its sense of smell, and the fish is killed by its sense of taste; death comes through each of the senses and the man who serves the

¹ *Kāla* is the primary means by which Shri Kṛṣṇa's *Māyā shakti* manifests the *jagat* out of Shri Kṛṣṇa. See p. 78 of Part I above. See also: MRUDULA I MARFATIA, *The Philosophy of Vallabhācārya* (Delhi : Munshiram Manoharlal, 1967), pp. 212–213.

² "Prabhu" which means "master", is another of the terms used for the Supreme Being in Vallabhācārya's *Sampradāya*.

³ For a discussion of Vallabhācārya's concept of *samsāra*, see pp. 70–71 of Part I above.

five senses is certainly devoured by time (*kāla*).’ So, the five senses must be subdued just as the five playing-pieces in *caupada* are captured. That is why I said in my poem—Subdue the five. In *caupada* there are three dice and the worst throw, which no one wants, is three aces; the three aces are like the three *guṇas* of *Māyā*—*tāmasa*, *rājasa*, and *sāttvika*¹—and all of this *samsāra* is the *caupada* board on which the dice are craftily rolled. The craftiness lies in never looking at the dice after they are rolled; thus, the other players may be cheated since they will not notice and remember the values on the dice. Just in this way do lust, rage, the other elements of delusion, and the *Māyā* of Bhagavān which has a feminine form deceive the entire world. That is why I said in my *pada*—Think about the board and stay away from the three aces; forget lust, anger, passion, and greed and trick the cheating woman. Just as one who has lost at *caupada* beats his hands together in frustration and gets up to go so that man is also frustrated who has lost his body without having worshipped the lotus-feet of Shri Thākuraji. That is what I meant by the last line of my poem, which goes: He who has not worshipped the feet of Hari beats his hands together in frustration.”

The Vaiṣṇavaś were very pleased with Sūradāsa when they heard this explanation.

Prasāṅga 3²

Whenever Shri Ācāryajī saw Sūradāsa, he used to say to him, “Come here, Ocean-Sūra (Sūra-Sāgara)! ” Shri Ācāryajī called Sūradāsa an ocean because all things are in the ocean and Sūradāsa had composed thousands of *padas*³ in which were descriptions of knowledge and renunciation, of the different kinds of *bhakti* and of the various *avatāras* of Bhagavān, and of all the divine *līlās*. People everywhere learned Sūradāsa’s *padas* and sang them.⁴

Tānasena⁵ learned one of the *padas* composed by Sūradāsa and sang it before the Emperor Akbar.⁶ When Akbar had heard the *pada*, he immediately asked how he could arrange a meeting with the outstanding *bhakta* who had composed it. Tānasena told the Emperor that the composer of the *kirtana* was named Sūradāsajī and that he lived in Braj.

¹The three *gunas* and *Māyā* are discussed on pp. 67 and 78 of Part I above.

²Numbered *prasāṅga* 4 in some editions.

³According to Premanārāyaṇa Ṭāndana, some five thousand of Sūradāsa’s *padas* have come to light so far. See : PREMANĀRĀYAÑA ṬANDANA, *Sūradāsa kī Vārtā*, p. 53.

⁴See pp. 8–11 of Part I above for a discussion of the importance of the popularity of Sūradāsa’s *padas* for the Vallabha *Sampradāya*.

⁵Tānasena was an outstanding sixteenth century North Indian musician. See : S. M. IKRAM, *Muslim Civilization in India* (New York : Columbia University Press, 1964), p. 251.

⁶See the discussion of Akbar’s relations with Viṭṭhalanātha (Shri Gusāniji) on p. 54 in Part I above.

When Akbar had received this information, he devised a plan by which he might meet Sūradāsa. While Akbar was on his way from Delhi to Āgrā, he sent a messenger to find the exact whereabouts of the poet Sūradāsajī who sang *padas* before Shri Nāthajī in Braj. The messenger was instructed to make his report to Akbar in Mathurā without letting Sūradāsa know anything about the inquiry. The messenger went to the temple of Shri Nāthajī on Govardhana Hill and learned there that Sūradāsa had gone to Mathurā. The messenger went to Mathurā, had a watch kept over Sūradāsa, and went and told the Emperor that the poet was in Mathurā. The Emperor Akbar then sent several men to bring Sūradāsa to him and this was done. Akbar paid great respect and veneration to Sūradāsa and then said to him, "Sūradāsajī, you have composed many *padas* in honour of Viṣṇu; please recite some of them for me."

Sūradāsa then sang a *pada* before the Emperor Akbar and the Emperor was very pleased when he had heard it.

[*Bhāvapratikāsha*

The *pada* which Sūradāsa sang before Akbar was one which, if it were kept well in mind, would lead one to clearness of thought and to the grace (*anugraha*) of Bhagavān. It was a *pada* which would cause one to attach his mind to the divine lotus-feet and to renounce *samsāra*; it was a *pada* by which one caught in fear of evil company could concentrate his mind on righteous company (*satsaṅga*).¹ By this *pada* love of the body would be dispelled and attachment to the *laukika* would be severed. It was a *pada* of the *alaukika* love of Bhagavān and by it affection for Bhagavān would increase.]

Akbar then thought to himself that he would test Sūradāsa by asking the poet to sing of his royal glory; if Sūradāsa were really completely devoted to Bhagavān, then Akbar knew that he would not praise any earthly king. In accordance with his intention, Akbar said to Sūradāsa, "Shri Bhagavān has given me the power to rule and every talented person has sung of my glory. You also are very gifted, so you ought to sing of my fame. If you have any desire in your heart, you need only ask for it."

Sūradāsa then sang a *pada*, but it was in praise of Bhagavān Shri Kṛṣṇa and not of Akbar. When Akbar had heard the *pada*, he thought to himself, "Would Sūradāsajī sing of my fame? If he were at all greedy, then he would have sung of my majesty. But, since he is a man who belongs to Parameshvara² he will sing only of the fame of Parameshvara."

¹See the discussion given on pp. 40-41 of Part I above of the importance that Vallabhācārya, like almost all Vaiṣṇava leaders, placed on association with virtuous—in the *bhaktimārgī* sense—people.

²"Parameshvara" means "the Highest God" or "the Supreme God"

In the last foot of his poem, Sūradāsa had sung, “Sūradāsa says that his eyes are dying of thirst for *darshana* (of Shrī Kṛṣṇa).”

With this last foot in mind, the Emperor said to Sūradāsa, “Sūradāsa, you have no eyes, so how can you say that your eyes are dying of thirst?”

Sūradāsa answered, “What do you know about this matter? Anyone can have ordinary eyes, but only those eyes which are always with Bhagavān can thirst for *darshana* of Bhagavān. Every moment such eyes taste of the *raza* of the bliss of the divine form (*svarūpa*) and yet such eyes are always dying of thirst for sight of that form.”

When Akbar had heard this, he said, “Such eyes that are near Parameshvara both see him and do not see him.”

The Emperor Akbar wanted to conciliate Sūradāsa by giving him a couple of villages and great wealth, but Sūradāsa would accept nothing.

Then Akbar said to Sūradāsajī, “Bābā Sāhib! Give me a command.”

Sūradāsa answered, “From now on, never again summon me and never try to meet me again.”

|*Bhāvaprakāsha*

The Emperor Akbar was a man with great spiritual insight. He became a *mleccha*¹ after he had fallen from a spiritually advanced state. In a previous birth Akbar was a young man in the stage of *Brahmacarya*² whose name was Bālamukunda. One day, Bālamukunda drank some milk without straining it and a hair of a cow which was in the milk passed into his stomach. For this crime Bālamukunda became the *mleccha* Akbar.]

Then Akbar paid homage to Sūradāsa and allowed him to go.

Prasaṅga 43

Sūradāsa went back to the temple of Shrī Govardhananātha jī. Akbar went to Āgrā and made a search for *padas* composed by Sūradāsa and he bought *padas* by Sūradāsa for gold and silver coins. He read these *padas* after they had been translated into Persian. Out of greed for gold coins, Pāṇḍita Kavīshvara composed verses which he passed off as having been composed by Sūradāsa. When one of these *padas* was brought to Akbar, Akbar said, “This *pada* is not by Sūradāsa; it is a forgery made for money.”

¹A *mleccha* is a non-Hindu.

²For a description of the *Brahmacaryāśrama*, see p. 31 of Part I above.

³*Prasaṅga* 4, like *prasaṅgas* 6–10 of Harirāyaji’s version of Sūradāsa’s *Vārtā*, was not in the original collection of *prasaṅgas* about Sūradāsa made by Gokulanātha. Harirāyaji evidently recovered these *prasaṅgas* from oral traditions in the *Sampradāya*. See: PREMANĀRĀYANA TĀNDANA, *Sūradāsa kī Vārtā*, pp. 60, 65, 71, 74, 84, 87.

Paṇḍita Kavīshvara said, "What makes you think that Sūradāsa did not compose this *pada*; it certainly is his *pada*."

The Emperor Akbar had one of Sūradāsa's *padas* written down on a piece of paper and then he took it and Paṇḍita Kavīshvara's bogus *pada* and put them both into a jar of water. As he did so he said, "Īshvara will judge which one of these two *padas* is really by Sūradāsa."

When the two pieces of paper were taken out of the water, it was found that the one on which Sūradāsa's *pada* was written was not even damp while the paper on which the *pada* forged by Paṇḍita Kavīshvara was written was soaked.

|*Bhāvaprakāsha*

Similarly, whoever sings the *padas* composed by those *Bhagavadiyas* who have found Bhagavān will get across *samsāra*, but whoever sings the poetry composed by clever, *laukika* men will drown in *samsāra*.]

Thus Paṇḍita Kavīshvara was completely put to shame and had to hang down his head and slink off to his house. Sūradāsa was a *Bhagavadiya* who had received the entire mercy of Shrī Ācāryajī.

Prasāṅga 5

Sūradāsajī performed the *sevā* of singing *kirtana* before Shrī Nāthaji for a long time. Whenever the time came for Kumbhanadāsajī or Paramā-nandadāsajī to sing *kirtana*, then Sūradāsajī used to go to Gokula¹ to have *darshana* of Shrī Navanītapriyajī. One day, Sūradāsajī came to Gokula and began to sing many *padas* of *bālalilā*.² When Shrī Gusāñjī³ heard these *padas*, he became very happy. Then Shrī Gusāñjī himself composed a *kirtana* in Sanskrit on the subject of the cradle of Shrī Kṛṣṇa and taught it to Sūradāsa; when Shrī Navanītapriyajī was placed in his cradle, Sūradāsa sang the cradle-*kirtana* composed by Shrī Gusāñjī. Then Sūradāsa composed several *padas* in Braj Bhāṣā on the pattern of Shrī Gusāñjī's *pada* and sang them. When Sūradāsajī had sung many *padas* on the theme of *bālalilā* before Shrī Navanītapriyajī, Shrī Giri-

¹When the events narrated in this *prasāṅga* occurred, Viṭṭalanāthaji had settled his family in Gokula on land granted to him by the Emperor Akbar.

²*Bālalilā* is the *lilā* that Shri Kṛṣṇa performed as a child (*bāla*) in Braj. *Padas* of the *bālalilā* are especially suited to Shrī Navanītapriyajī, which is a *svarūpa* of Shri Kṛṣṇa as a child. The *vātsalya bhāva* in which the *bhakta* devotes himself to Shrī Kṛṣṇa as if Shri Kṛṣṇa were his child is the primary *bhāva* of the *bhakti* of the Vallabha *Sampradāya*. *Bālalilā* is of utmost importance for the experiencing of the *vātsalya bhāva*.

³"Gusāñjī" (which is the Braj Bhāṣā form of the Sanskrit title "Gosvāmī," which means "Master of Cows" or "Master of the Senses"—see p. 93 of Part I above) is the title taken by Vallabhācārya's younger son Viṭṭhalanātha. The title was also used in the Caitanya *Sampradāya* and may have been borrowed by Viṭṭhalanātha from that sect.

dharajī,¹ the other sons of Shrī Gusāñjī, and Shrī Gusāñjī himself said : “Sūradāsajī praises Shrī Navanītāpriyajī in his *kīrtanas* just as we adorn Shrī Navanītāpriyajī with beautiful garments for the *darshana* periods.” In this way, much favour was shown to Sūradāsa.

Prasanga 6

When Shrī Gusāñjī left Gokula for the temple of Shrī Nāthajī, Sūradāsa intended to go with him. But Shrī Giridharajī and the other sons of Shrī Gusāñjī detained him by persuading him that he should stay and recite *kīrtana* for Shrī Navanītāpriyajī for at least two more days. Then, Shrī Govindarāyajī, Shrī Bālakṛṣṇajī, and Shrī Gokulanāthajī² all said to Shrī Giridharajī : “Sūradāsajī always describes just the kind of clothes and jewels that we give to Shrī Navanītāpriyajī at the *shringāra darshana* period.³ Some day, we should perform a strange and unusual *shringāra* without letting Sūradāsa know what we intend to do ; then we can see what kind of *kīrtana* Sūradāsa will sing.”

Giridharajī answered, “Sūradāsajī is a *Bhagavadiya* who experiences the bliss (*ānanda*) of the divine *svarūpa* in his heart. Sūradāsa will be able to compose and sing a *kīrtana* that will describe any *shringāra* that you will be able to put on. You should not test a *Bhagavadiya* (like Sūradāsajī).”

Giridharajī’s brothers said to him, “We realize all this; we don’t intend to be insolent.”

Then Giridharajī said, “In the morning when we perform the *shringāra* of Shrī Navanītāpriyajī we will perform an extraordinary *shringāra*.”

The next morning, Shrī Giridharajī and his three brothers went together to the temple of Shrī Navanītāpriyajī and bathed in preparation for *sevā*; then, they awakened Shrī Navanītāpriyajī and made the first food offering of the day.⁴ Then they bathed and began to perform the *shringāra*. The weather at that season was very hot, so they did not put any clothing on Shrī Navanītāpriyajī. They put a band of pearls around his arm, two strands of pearls around his head, a belt of small bells around his waist, a necklace all of pearls on his neck, a *tilaka* mark on his forehead, a ring in his nose, an earring in his ear, and nothing else.

Meanwhile, Sūradāsajī had an experience of the divine in his heart that made him think to himself : “Today, a very wonderful *shringāra* has been prepared for Shrī Navanītāpriyajī ; it is a *shringāra* the like of which

¹Giridhara (A.D. 1541–1621) was the eldest son of Viṭṭhalanātha. For details of his life, see : MĪTALA, *Braj ke Dharm-Sampradāyoy kā Itihāsa*, pp. 281–283.

²Govindarāya, Bālakṛṣṇa, and Gokulanātha were the second, third, and fourth sons, respectively, of Viṭṭhalanātha. See : MĪTALA, *Braj ke Dharm* . . . pp. 285, 287, 288–292.

³*Shringāra darshana*, when the divine *svarūpa* is dressed, is the second *darshana* period of the day.

⁴This would be the *māigalā darshana* period.

I have never seen nor heard. Shri Navanītāpriyajī is wearing only pearls and no clothes at all. Therefore, I must also sing wonderful *kirtanas* today."

Then the *shringāra darshana* began and Shri Giridharajī called Sūradāsa to come to the temple to have *darshana* and to sing *kirtana*. Sūradāsajī then sang a *kirtana* to Shri Navanītāpriyajī that described him just as he was; Shri Giridharajī and his brothers felt great delight when they had heard this *kirtana*. They asked Sūradāsa how he had been able to compose such a *kirtana* and he answered that he had composed an extraordinary *kirtana* to suit the extraordinary *shringāra*. The four brothers were very pleased with Sūradāsa when they had heard his answer. Sūradāsajī was a *Bhagavadīya* who had received the full favour of Shri Ācāryajī. Shri Ācāryajī caused him to experience Shri Thākurajī continually in his heart.

When Giridharajī returned to the temple of Shri Nāthajī on Govardhana Hill, he took Sūradāsajī with him. Shri Giridharajī told Shri Gusānijī how his younger brothers had wanted a very unusual *shringāra* of Shri Navanītāpriyajī to be performed and how Sūradāsajī had had divine experience in his heart and had sung a marvellous *kirtana* at that *darshana*.

Shri Gusānijī then said to Shri Giridharajī: "Don't you know about Sūradāsajī? He is the ship of the *Puṣṭimārga*¹ and he experiences the *līlā* of Bhagavān every hour of the day. Sūradāsajī has received the mercy of Shri Ācāryajī."

Prasaṅga 7

The son of a *Brajvāsi*² always stayed near Sūradāsa and did his work for him. The boy's name was Gopāla. One day, when he had sat down to take *prasāda*³ Sūradāsa told Gopāla to go and fill his water-pot with water. Gopāla assured Sūradāsajī that it would be all right for him to start eating the *prasāda* since he would be right back with the water. When Gopāla went to get some cow dung, before going to fill the water-pot,⁴ he met a group of Vaiṣṇavas and began talking with them. Soon,

¹By calling Sūradāsa "the ship of the *Puṣṭimārga*" Shri Gusānijī meant that Sūradāsa was loaded with a great supply of knowledge of the doctrines of the *Puṣṭimārga*, just as a ship may be loaded with a great cargo of merchandise. See: PRĒMANĀRĀYĀNA TĀNDANA, *Sūradāsa ki Vārtā*, p. 67.

²A *Brajvāsi* is a native of the Braj region; a person who is called a *Brajvāsi* in the literature of Vallabhācāryā's *Sampradāya* is assumed to be a Vaiṣṇava.

³*Prasāda* is the food which has been offered to a deity and is then eaten by the *bhaktas* of that deity. The taking of *prasāda* is a characteristic of Vaiṣṇava worship. By eating the food which has been offered to one's deity, one shows his humility before that deity and his dependence upon that deity.

⁴Cow dung would be necessary to purify the area in which Sūradāsa was eating the *prasāda*. Cow dung is one of the purest substances for Vaiṣṇavas, as well as for most other orthodox Hindus.

he had forgotten all about Sūradāsaji's water. Meanwhile, Sūradāsa had begun to eat the *prasāda*. While eating, a piece of the food stuck in Sūradāsa's throat and he began groping around with his left hand for his water-pot. With the food in his throat stopping all speech and being unable to find his water-pot, Sūradāsa fell into panic. At just that moment, Shrī Nāthajī came to Sūradāsa and gave him his own water-pitcher. Sūradāsaji drank some water from the pitcher.

In the meantime, Gopāla had suddenly remembered that he had not gotten the water and quickly ran back to Sūradāsaji. When he discovered that Sūradāsaji had finished the food, he was astonished and said : "Sūradāsaji, where did you get the water to drink with the *prasāda*? I went to get some cow dung and got into a conversation with some Vaiṣṇavas and completely forgot about getting your water."

Sūradāsaji replied, "Why do you use the name 'Gopāla'? Gopāla is one of the names of Shrī Nāthajī. It was he who helped me today. A piece of food was caught in my throat, without water I could not speak, I began to get excited. Then, a pitcher of water came into my hand and, assuming that you had brought it, I drank from it. But now you say that you were not here. Therefore, it must have been the Gopāla who is in the temple [i.e., Shrī Nāthajī] who brought the pitcher of water to me. Now, go and see what the pitcher from which I drank looks like."

Gopāla the Brajvāsi went over to the place where Sūradāsaji had taken the *prasāda* and saw that the pitcher there was made of gold. He picked up the golden pitcher and went back to tell Sūradāsa about it. When Sūradāsa learned that the pitcher was made of gold, he said to Gopāla the Brajvāsi : "You have done something very bad; you have caused Shrī Thākurajī to go to a lot of trouble. Take the pitcher and return it to Shrī Thākurajī for me. Take good care of the pitcher. When Shrī Gusānijī has awakened from his nap, give the pitcher to him."

Gopāla did just as Sūradāsaji had commanded and went to Shrī Gusānijī with the pitcher and threw himself down before him.

When Shrī Gusānijī saw the golden pitcher, he said : "How did you get that pitcher? It belongs to Shrī Govardhanadhara."

Gopāla answered, "Mahārāja! I have not committed a crime." And then he told Shrī Gusānijī the whole story of the pitcher. When Shrī Gusānijī had heard the account, he immediately bathed, wrapped the pitcher in a cloth, took it to the temple, and offered a drink of water to Shrī Govardhanadhara. As soon as Shrī Gusānijī had done this, he said to Shrī Govardhanadhara : "Today, you have protected Sūradāsa. Without you how would the Vaiṣṇavas be protected?"

In reply to this, Shrī Nāthajī said, "Sūradāsa was in a panic because of a piece of food caught in his throat, so I brought him a pitcher of water."

[*Bhāvaprakāsha*

Shrī Nāthajī said, "When Sūradāsa becomes excited, then I get excited too. Whoever is a *Bhagavadiya* is my *svarūpa*."¹

Later, when the doors of the temple were opened for the *utthāpana darshana* period,² Sūradāsajī came to have *darshana*. As soon as Shrī Gusānijī had made the food offering to Shrī Nāthajī, he said to Sūradāsa, "You have received great favour from Gopāla [i.e., from Shrī Nāthajī today]."

Then Sūradāsajī answered, "Mahārāja! It was by your mercy. What notice would Shrī Nāthajī take of a wicked person like me? But anyone can be accepted by Shrī Nāthajī through the intercession of Shrī Ācāryajī."

Then Shrī Gusānijī said, "You are a great *Bhagavadiya*; where but in a *Bhagavadiya* could such humbleness be found? Thus was Sūradāsajī the recipient of the favour of Shrī Ācāryajī.

Prasaṅga 8

In the village of Gopālapura [Gopālapura is today called "Jatipura"],³ which is located below the temple of Shrī Nāthajī on Govardhana Hill, there lived a certain merchant who was so involved in avarice and the worldly life that he had never had *darshana* of Shrī Nāthajī and he had never sought the protection of Shrī Gusānijī.⁴ Since this merchant's shop was right beneath Shrī Nāthajī's temple, it was passed by the Vaiṣṇavas going to and coming from the *darshana* periods at Shrī Nāthajī's temple. Each day, before opening his shop, the merchant would ask the first Vaiṣṇava to pass by on his way home from the *darshana* of Shrī Nāthajī to describe the dress and adornment (*śṛṅgāra*) of Shrī Nāthajī on that day. Then the merchant would put on the Vaiṣṇava necklace made of *tulasī* beads, apply the Vaiṣṇava *tilaka*,⁵ make the Vaiṣṇava marks on his body, and open his shop. Then, he would hail each group of Vaiṣṇavas to pass by and glorify that day's *darshana* before them. He would eloquently discuss the *śṛṅgāra* of Shrī Nāthajī with the Vaiṣṇavas and tell them how *alaukika* the *darshana* had been. The merchant did all this as sham; in fact, he never had been to have *darshana* of Shrī Nāthajī. When he gave such accounts of the love of Shrī Nāthajī, the Vaiṣṇavas were very pleased and considered the merchant to be a true Vaiṣṇava.

¹At the highest level of *Puṣṭimārgī bhakti*, Shrī Kṛṣṇa is as devoted to his *bhaktas* as they are to him. This is the state enjoyed by those *bhaktas* who are companions of Shrī Kṛṣṇa. See p. 89 of Part I above.

²See p. 49 of Part I above.

³MĪTALA, *Braj kā Sānskr̥tika Itihāsa*, pp. 111-112.

⁴That is, he had never asked Shrī Gusānijī to initiate him into the Vallabha *Sampradāya*.

⁵A *tilaka* is a mark, which varies in form according to sect, which religious Hindus put on the forehead. The *tilaka* used by members of Vallabhācārya's *Sampradāya* consists of two long parallel lines of red that meet in a semi-circle at the root of the nose. A red dot is placed just above the semi-circle.

They used to buy things at his shop. In this way, the Vaiṣṇavas were deceived by the merchant's hypocrisy. The merchant made a great deal of money, but he spent as little as possible. Acting in this way, the merchant reached the age of sixty.

One day, this merchant said to Sūradāsajī, "Sūradāsajī, see how beautiful the *śringāra* was today. But, you never buy anything from my shop; in fact, you never even come into my store. What sin have I done that keeps such a virtuous Vaiṣṇava as you from shopping in my store? This shop is yours. I am the servant of you Vaiṣṇavas; please have mercy on me."

While listening to the merchant talk on in this manner, Sūradāsa thought to himself, "Look how sweetly this shopkeeper talks. I must expose his greedy cunning to those who have been tricked by him. This merchant has never had *darshana* of Shrī Nāthajī, but I may be able to get him to the *darshana*. I may even be able to make a Vaiṣṇava of him."

Then Sūradāsa said aloud to the merchant, "In your entire lifetime you have never had *darshana* of Shrī Nāthajī and you are not a Vaisnava. That is the reason I have never come to your shop. You ought to tell the truth and admit that you have never had *darshana* of Shrī Nāthajī."

The shopkeeper became quite abashed when he had heard the words of Sūradāsa; he replied, "Sūradāsajī, please don't say such things in front of anyone. I have never had *darshana* because, if I were to close my shop to go to *darshana*, the Vaiṣṇavas who are my customers would go to other shops to do business. If that should happen, how would I be able to eat? Furthermore, I have no man who will come and tell me when the *darshana* is about to begin so that I might run up the hill to have *darshana*."

"If I come and tell you when the *darshana* is about to begin," said Sūradāsa, "then will you come?"

The merchant answered, "Yes, if you will come and tell me when it is time for *darshana*, I will come. I want very much to have *darshana*."

Sūradāsa said that he would come to get the merchant at the *utthāpana darshana* period. When the hour of the *utthāpana darshana* had arrived and the temple conch had sounded, Sūradāsa came to the merchant and told him that it was time for him to come to *darshana*. The merchant, however, told Sūradāsa that he could not come right then because it was time for the village people to come to shop. He asked Sūradāsa to tell him when the temple doors were opened for the next *darshana* period, the period of the *bhoga darshana*. Sūradāsa went up to the temple and had *darshana* and sang *kirtanas*. At the time of the *bhoga darshana* Sūradāsa again went down to get the merchant. But the merchant said that he could not go at that time either because it was at that time that the cows were driven in from the pasture. If he were not in his shop, he said, the cows would come and eat all of the grain he had for sale. He asked

Sūradāsa to come back for him at the time of the *sandhyārati darshana*.

When Sūradāsa came to tell the merchant that it was time for the *sandhyārati darshana*, the merchant said, "Sūradāsaji, you have gone to a great deal of trouble for me today; however, it is now time to light the household lamps. They say that Lakṣmī¹ comes around at this time of evening; she will not come to a house in which there is no lighted lamp. Besides, what if someone should steal grain from my shop because it is unlighted. I will have *darshana* early tomorrow morning at the *maṅgalā darshana* period. Please come and get me then; I will wait until after I have had *darshana* to open my store. I have caused you to run back and forth a good deal today."

Sūradāsaji then went back up to have *darshana* of Shri Nāthajī. Later, when it was time for the *shayana darshana*—the last *darshana* period of the day—Sūradāsa sang *kirtana* before Shri Nāthajī. At dawn on the next day, Sūradāsa got up, bathed, and went down to tell the merchant that the time for *darshana* had come. But the merchant said that he must sweep the store and prepare to open. For, he said, if, at the time when the first sale of the day should be made, any customer should go away without buying, then there would be no business the rest of the day. He asked Sūradāsa to come back at the time of the *śrīgāra darshana* and he promised that he would close his shop and go to that *darshana*. Sūradāsaji went to the *maṅgalā darshana*. When the time came for the *śrīgāra darshana*, Sūradāsaji went back to the merchant's shop. The merchant then said to him: "I have not yet made a good sale today and the cattle are roaming around in the street. However, I will definitely come to the *rājabhoga darshana*. Since yesterday, you have put yourself to great inconvenience on my account. You are a great *Bhagavadiya*."

Sūradāsaji went and had *darshana* of the *śrīgāra* of Shri Nāthajī and sang *kirtanas*. At the time of the *rājabhoga darshana* Sūradāsa went to the merchant and asked him to come. But the merchant said, "How can I leave my shop at this time? This is the time of day for meeting people and making sales. The Vaiṣnavas will be coming down from the hill after the *rājabhoga* and all of them will want to buy something. I am too old to rush down the hill back to my shop right after the *darshana*. I will go to the *uthāpana darshana*."

In this way, Sūradāsaji wasted three days on the shopkeeper. The merchant was far too greedy to leave his shop to go to *darshana*. On the fourth day, Sūradāsa bathed and went to the *maṅgalā darshana* in the early morning. Sūradāsa considered, on his way to the *maṅgalā darshana*,

¹Lakṣmi, the wife of the god Viṣṇu, is the Hindu goddess who grants material wealth and prosperity. See: ALAIN DANIELOU, *Hindu Polytheism* (New York: Bollingen Foundation, 1964), pp. 261–262.

how the merchant had procrastinated for three days and had not once had *darshana* in all that time. Sūradāsa decided that he would have to use fear to make the merchant go to the *darshana*. Sūradāsajī had, by then, reached the merchant's shop. He stopped and said to the merchant, "I have spent three days going back and forth between your shop and the temple, but you have never come to the *darshana*. Now you must come."

The merchant answered, "After I have made my first sale for today, I will come to the *śrīṅgāra darshana*."

Sūradāsa said to the merchant, "I will tell all of the Vaiṣṇavas that you are a fraud, that you have never had *darshana*, and that you are most certainly not a Vaiṣṇava. And if some Vaiṣṇavas still do business with you, I will compose verses about your perversity and I will sing them to the Vaiṣṇavas." Then, Sūradāsa sang a sample of the kind of verse he would sing about the merchant in front of the Vaiṣṇavas.

When the merchant had heard this sample verse, he became greatly afraid and fell at Sūradāsa's feet and begged him not to lampoon him in his poetry. He even promised to go at once to *darshana* with Sūradāsa. The two went together to the temple on Govardhana Hill. When the doors were opened for the *māngalā darshana*, Sūradāsajī said to Shrī Nāthaji: "Mahārāja! This shopkeeper is a *daivī jīva*;¹ please charm his heart now and grant him deliverance (*uddhāra*).² He lives under your banner."³

Shrī Nāthajī answered,⁴ "If he lives near me, does he know me? One who has the favour of all *Bhagavadīyas* can find me."

[*Bhāvaprakāsha*

There are great numbers of *jīvas* living in the Gangā and Yamunā Rivers, but are they all spiritually successful? All of the flies, mosquitos, and insects are *jīvas* belonging to Shrī Prabhu, but are

¹For discussion of the place of the *daivī jīvas* in Vallabhācārya's thought, see Part I above, pp. 71–73.

²See p. 61 of Part I above.

³A banner is flown over Vaiṣṇava temples that contain a divine image or *svarūpa*. Since the merchant's shop was located right below Shrī Nāthaji's temple, it was under Shrī Nāthaji's banner (*dhvajā*).

⁴According to the doctrines of Vallabhācārya's *Puṣṭimārga*, Shrī Kṛṣṇa—as Shrī Nāthaji or any of the other divine *svarūpas*—feels a love for his perfect *bhaktas* that is as strong as the love that they feel for him. As a result, Shrī Kṛṣṇa and his *bhaktas* need each other equally and are in each other's control; these perfect *bhaktas* are, thus, able to talk with Shrī Kṛṣṇa and are able to engage in activities with him. All of this direct speech and action with the divine takes place on the *alaukika* plane and is imperceptible to those who are still bound by worldly life. See *prasaṅga* 7 on pp. 125–127 above. See also: PREMANĀRĀ-YĀNA TĀNDANA, *Sūradāsa ki Vārtā* p. 72. BHAI MANILAL C. PAREKH, *Sri Vallabhacharya Life, Teachings and Movement* (Rajkot : Sri Bhagavata Dharma Mission, 1943), pp. 320–321.

all of them successful? Whoever associates with *Bhagavadiyas* will find spiritual satisfaction. He will reach Shri Prabhu. *Dāsabhāva*, which leads to the divine favour, arises from association with *Bhagavadiyas*.]¹

The Shri Nāthajī gave that shopkeeper such a wonderful *darshana* that his heart was enraptured. When the *darshana* period was over, the merchant seized Sūradāsajī's feet and begged, "Mahārāja! I have spent my whole life in vain piling up wealth. Now I want to spend the money that I have hoarded on whatever you command me to buy. I want to become a Vaiṣṇava; help me to become a *sevaka* of Shri Gusānijī."

Sūradāsajī had the merchant go and bathe and then come back—without touching anyone—and sit down. When Shri Gusānijī had finished the *shṛṅgāra*, Sūradāsa asked him to take the merchant into his protection.

Shri Gusānijī said, "Sūradāsajī, you have won over a sixty-year old fool. If it were not for you, this shopkeeper would have spent his whole life uselessly."

Then Shri Gusānijī summoned the merchant and seated him in the presence of Shri Nāthajī. Then he gave him the divine name and initiated him by means of the *Brahmasambandha* rite. In this manner, that merchant's thought became pure and, ever after, he attended all of the *darshana* periods. He gave many presents to Shri Gusānijī for Shri Nāthajī and he had clothing, jewellery, and food purchased for Shri Nāthajī. One day, the merchant said to Sūradāsajī, "Sūradāsajī, it was by your favour that I obtained *darshana* of Shri Govardhananāthajī and became a Vaiṣṇava. Please have mercy on me again so that Prabhu might accept me in my present life and that the happiness and sorrow of *samsāra* might no longer vex me."

Sūradāsajī composed a *pada* and taught it to the merchant. That merchant became completely absorbed in *bhakti*. He set aside all fondness for *laukika* things. Knowledge, freedom from worldly desires (*vairāgya*), and, above all, *bhakti* came to him. He was steadfastly attached (*āsakta*) to the lotus-feet of Shri Nāthajī and he had experience of the bliss of the divine *svarūpa*. He was drowned in *rasa*. Thus, even a greedy merchant, through association with Sūradāsajī, found spiritual success. Sūradāsajī was an outstanding *Bhagavadiya*.

[*Bhāvaprakāsha*

This merchant was originally a *daivī jīva*. He was actually a *sakhī* (female companion) of Shri Lalitājī named "Virajā" in the eternal *līlā*. He experienced *līlā* because of his association with Sūradāsa. Association with *Bhagavadiyas* is of primary importance.]

¹For discussion of *dāsabhāva*, see p. 88 of Part I above.

Prasāṅga 9

One time, Paramānandadāsa and ten or fifteen other Vaiṣṇavas all came to Govardhana Hill from Gokula in order to visit Sūradāsajī and to have *darshana* of Shrī Govardhananāthajī. After they had attended the *shayana darshana*, they all went to see Sūradāsajī. Sūradāsajī showed great respect and veneration to all of those Vaiṣṇavas and sang a *kīrtana* for them. Then, Sūradāsajī asked the Vaiṣṇavas to favour him by asking him to do something for them. The Vaiṣṇavas requested him to sing about the nature of love, about the affection of Shrī Thākurajī, and about the final essence of being, *yoga*, and knowledge. Sūradāsa sang a *kīrtana* about these things and, in this way, he instructed the Vaiṣṇavas. All of the Vaiṣṇavas were delighted; they realized that the divine grace had fallen upon Sūradāsajī. When morning came, they had *darshana* of Shrī Nāthajī and, after taking leave of Sūradāsa, returned to Gokula. Sūradāsajī was a *Bhagavadīya* who had received great favour from Shrī Ācāryajī.

Prasāṅga 10

In this way, Sūradāsajī did *sevā* for Bhagavān for many days. Eventually, the time came when Sūradāsajī knew that Bhagavān Shrī Kṛṣṇa, by his own divine will (*icchā*),¹ had summoned him [to leave the earth and enter the eternal *līlā*].

[*Bhāvaprakāsha*

It is the sacred rule of Prabhu that, when he himself has decided to leave Vaikuṇṭha² and manifest himself on earth, he first of all manifests on earth his own *bhaktas* who dwell in Vaikuṇṭha. Then, when he has become manifest on earth, he can perform *līlā* with his *bhaktas*. After a time, he causes these *bhaktas* to become unmanifest (*tirodhāna*)³ on earth (*jagat*) and to return to the performance of *līlā* in Vaikuṇṭha. In just this way Nanda, Yashodā, the *gopis*, the *sakhās*, Vasudeva, Devakī, and the Yādavas⁴ all became manifest on earth before Bhagavān Shrī Kṛṣṇa himself. Then Bhagavān himself became manifest. After Bhagavān Shrī Kṛṣṇa had finished his *līlā* on earth, he made the *laukika* (worldly) *līlā* of the Yādavas—by means of the iron mace—unmanifest.⁵ Shrī Kṛṣṇa did not, however, show the

¹See pp. 61, 70 of Part I above.

²Here “Vaikuṇṭha” means all of the heavenly plane—including Goloka—on which Shrī Kṛṣṇa dwells with his *bhaktas*. See p. 79 of Part I above.

³“*Tirodhāna*” is used for “*tirobhāva*,” see p. 66 above in Part I.

⁴The Yādavas were the members of the lineage group or tribe to which Shrī Kṛṣṇa belonged during his earthly *līlā*.

⁵The Yādavas and the earthly body of Shrī Kṛṣṇa were destroyed by an iron mace that had come into being because of a Brāhmaṇa’s curse. For the full story see *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* XI:1-24 and XI:30:1-50, translated into English in *VYĀSA*, V. pp. 139-141 and 264-269.

concealment (i.e., the finishing) of his *laukika līlā* to King Nanda, Yashodā, or the *gopis*. Both Shri Ācāryajī and Shri Gusāñjī are manifestations of Shri Kṛṣṇa the Supreme Being. Shri Kṛṣṇa made manifest the Vaiṣṇavas who are associated with *līlā*. [At the time when Sūradāsajī felt the call of Bhagavān to leave the worldly *līlā*], Shri Ācāryajī had already made his *līlā* unmanifest and Shri Gusāñjī was going to do the same shortly.¹ Before Shri Gusāñjī could leave the earthly *līlā*, the *Bhagavadiyas* had to be established in the eternal [i.e., *alaukika*] *līlā*. Shri Gusāñjī would not show the concealment of his *laukika līlā* to the *Bhagavadiyas*. That is why Shri Gusāñjī, so that he could finish his earthly *līlā* unobserved, told his follower Cācā Harivañsajī to go to Gujarāt.² It was by the *icchā* of Shri Govardhanadhara that Sūradāsajī be summoned into the eternal *līlā*.]

Sūradāsajī thought to himself, "I have vowed to produce 125,000 *kīrtanas*, but I have actually finished only 100,000 *kīrtanas*; before I can leave this earthly body, I must, with the help of Bhagavān, compose 25,000 more *kīrtanas*."

At just that moment, Shri Govardhananāthajī appeared and gave *darshana* to Sūradāsa and said : "Sūradāsajī! You have desired to compose 125,000 *kīrtanas*. Let your desire be fulfilled. I have completed 25,000 *kīrtanas* for you. Look in the collection of your *kīrtanas*."

Then Sūradāsa asked a Vaiṣṇava to look at his collected *kīrtanas*. The Vaiṣṇava looked at the collected *kīrtanas* and said that, in the midst of the *kīrtanas*, there were 25,000 *kīrtanas*, composed about all of the divine *līlās*, which carried the signature line "Sūrashyāma"³ and that when he had looked at the collection of *kīrtanas* on the previous day, there had been no *kīrtanas* with the signature Sūrashyāma.

Sūradāsa went immediately and fell before Shri Nāthajī, saying : "All of my wishes have been granted by your mercy. Now you must command me to do something for you."

Shri Govardhananāthajī said to Sūradāsa, "Enter into my *līlā* and feel the *rasa* of *līlā*." As soon as Shri Nāthajī had given this order, he vanished.

Then, Sūradāsajī prostrated himself before Shri Nāthajī and felt very glad in his heart. Two ordinary Vaiṣṇavas who were standing near Sūradāsa were completely unaware that Shri Thākurajī had appeared

¹The passage means that Shri Ācāryajī had already died and Shri Gusāñjī was to die in the near future.

²Cācā Harivañsajī was an important follower of Shri Gusāñjī who was one of the managers of the temples belonging to Shri Gusāñjī in Gokula. See: MĪTĀLA, *Braj ke Dharma-Sampradāyon kā Itihāsa*, p. 274.

³"Shyāma" (the Dark One) is one of the names of Shri Kṛṣṇa.

before Sūradāsajī and given him a command. One can certainly not experience the *svarūpa* of Shrī Thākurajī unless he is a *Bhagavadiya*.

Prasaṅga 11

Sūradāsajī thought to himself about the divine summons to enter the eternal *lilā* and went to Parāsolī.¹ Parāsolī is an *alaukika* place; it was at Parāsolī that Bhagavān Shrī Kṛṣṇa performed the entire *rāsa lilā*—all the *lilās* of which are described in the “Rāsapañcādhyāī”²—during the period of night called “Brahmarātra” and it was from the lake called “Candrasarovara”, which is at the village of Parāsolī, that the moon was manifested.

[*Bhāvaprakāsha*

There are eight *sakhās* of Shrī Kṛṣṇa and there are also eight gateways into Girirāja (i.e., into Govardhana Hill); each of the *sakhās* is in charge of one of these gates. When the time has come for each of these *sakhās* to leave the earthly *lilā*, then each abandons his earthly (i.e., *laukika*) body at his own gateway and assumes there his *alaukika* body and enters into the eternal *lilā*.³ The first of these gateways is at Govinda Kuṇḍa (“kuṇḍa” means pool), which faces Parāsolī-Candrasarovara; Sūradāsaji is in charge of the *sevā* there. The second gateway is at Apsarā Kuṇḍa; Chītaśvāmī is in charge of *sevā* there.⁴ The third gateway is at Surabhī Kuṇḍa; Paramānandadāsa is in charge of *sevā* there. The fourth gateway is near the Kadamakhanḍī of Govindasvāmī; Govindasvāmī⁵ is in charge of *sevā* there. The fifth is near Rudra Kuṇḍa; Caturbhujadāsa⁶ is in charge of *sevā* there. The sixth gateway is at Bilachū, a forest on the road to the place of the *rāsa lilā*; Kṛṣṇadāsa the *Adhikārī* is in charge of the *sevā* there. The seventh gateway is near the Mānasī Gangā; Nandadāsa⁷ is in charge of the *sevā* there. The eighth gateway faces Anyora, where the village of Jamunāvatau is located; Kumbhanadāsa is in charge of *sevā* there. Thus, the eternal nocturnal *lilā* of the grove [nikuñja *lilā*]⁸

¹For more information on the village of Parāsolī see: MĪTALA, *Braj kā Sāṃskritika Itihāsa*, pp. 109–110. F. S. GROWSE, *Mathurā: A District Memoir* (Allāhābād: N. W. Provinces and Oudh Govt. Press, 1883), p. 83.

²The “Rāsapañcādhyāī” is the name given to five chapters (from 29 to 33) of the tenth *skandha* of the *Bhāgavata Purāna*; in these five chapters Shrī Kṛṣṇa’s *rāsa lilā* with the *gopis* of Braj is described. See: VYASA, IV, pp. 119–139.

³CIMMANALĀ HARISHANKARAJĪ, *Puṣṭimārgopadeshikā*, trans. into Hindi by SHRĪ-MĀDHAVA SHARMĀ (Vārānasi : Shrimādhava Sharmā, 1941), pp. 146–147.

⁴See pp. 34–35 in Part I above.

⁵Ibid.

⁶Ibid.

⁷Ibid.

⁸See p. 12 in Part I above.

is inside of Girirāja. There are eight gateways to the *nikuñja līlā* and at each gateway there is a *sakhā*. Each *sakhā* has a *sakhi* form and so is able to experience the *līlā* and perform *sevā* continually.¹ Therefore, Sūradāsa had his residence at Parāsolī.]

Sūradāsajī fell down in homage to the banner of Shrī Govardhananāthajī, faced towards the banner, and slept. Then these thoughts came into his mind: "Shrī Ācāryajī and Shrī Gusāñjī have shown great favour to me and have caused me to experience in this earthly body the *līlā* of Shrī Govardhananāthajī. It would be very fortunate for me if Shrī Gusāñjī would have mercy on me and grant me *darshana*. Shrī Gusāñjī's name is "Great River of Mercy" and so he satisfies the desire of a *bhakta* and will always do so."

While Sūradāsa was thinking about Shrī Gusāñjī in the above manner, Shrī Gusāñjī was conducting the *shrīngāra* of Shrī Govardhananāthajī. That day, Shrī Gusāñjī noticed that Sūradāsa was not sitting in his usual place singing *kirtana*. When Shrī Gusāñjī asked the *sevakas* where Sūradāsajī was, one of them said that Sūradāsajī, as soon as he had had *darshana* at the *maṅgalā darshana* period and had bid the *sevakas* to remember Bhagavān, had gone off towards Parāsolī. Then Shrī Gusāñjī knew that the *icchā* of Bhagavān had called Sūradāsajī to Parāsolī. Shrī Gusāñjī commanded all the Vaiṣṇavas: "The ship of the *Puṣṭimārga*" is departing; whoever needs something from that ship should go now for it. Go there to Parāsolī to see Sūradāsajī." Shrī Gusāñjī continued to say that he himself would go to see Sūradāsajī after the *rājabhoga darshana*. Then all of the Vaiṣṇavas went to Sūradāsajī.

[*Bhāvaprakāsha*

The meaning of "ship" (when Shrī Gusāñjī called Sūradāsajī the Ship of the *Puṣṭimārga*) is as follows: Just as a ship is loaded with many kinds of merchandise, so Sūradāsajī's heart is filled with all kinds of *alaukika* things.]²

Sūradāsajī, meanwhile, had given up speech in order to fix all of his attention on Shrī Gusāñjī and on Shrī Govardhananāthajī. Shrī Gusāñjī sent fifteen Brajvāsīs to bring back news of Sūradāsajī. The Brajvāsīs came back and reported to him that Sūradāsajī was not talking to anyone. As soon as the *rājabhoga darshana* was over, Shrī Gusāñjī went to Parāsolī to see Sūradāsajī; with Shrī Gusāñjī were Rāmadāsa, Kumbhanadāsa, Govindasvāmī, Caturbhujadāsa, and other Vaiṣṇavas. Shrī Gusāñjī saw that Sūradāsajī was unconscious and was not aware of

¹See pp. 106–107 above.

²See p. 125 above.

anybody. Shri Gusāñjī took Sūradāsa's hand and said "Sūradāsajī! How are you?"

Sūradāsajī immediately got up and then threw himself down before Shri Gusāñjī and said : "Bābā! Have you come? I did not see you. You have given me *darshana* out of your great mercy. I was thinking of you." Then Sūradāsajī sang *padas* before Shri Gusāñjī.

Shri Gusāñjī said : "Shri Thākurajī gives humbleness like that expressed in Sūradāsajī's *padas* to his *Bhagavadiyas*. Such a humble *Bhagavadiya* is the recipient of the *rasa* of humility and has received the supreme divine favour."

Caturbhujadāsa, who was standing with all the other Vaiṣṇavas beside Shri Gusāñjī, said: "Sūradāsajī is the foremost *Bhagavadiya* and he has composed at least a hundred thousand *padas* for Shri Thākurajī. But Sūradāsajī has never described the glory of Shri Ācāryajī Mahā-prabhu."

When Sūradāsajī had heard this, he said: "I have described all the glory of Shri Ācāryajī; if I see something that is separate, then I make it separate (i.e., Sūradāsajī did not consider Shri Ācāryajī's glory to be different from the glory of Bhagavān). But, since you asked me, I will compose a *kīrtana* for you which contains all *kīrtanas* in its essence." Then, Sūradāsajī sang the following *kīrtana*:

Without firm trust in Vallabhācārya's feet¹ which have toenails with moon-like splendour, everything in the world becomes dark;

There is no other means of deliverance (*sādhana*) fit to be chosen in this *Kali Yuga*, so Sūra says, 'I am an unsalaried servant who is blind to any distinction.'

|Bhāvaprakāsha

In the above *kīrtana* Sūradāsajī explains the *bhāva* that is in his heart. By "firm trust" Sūradāsajī means that the *jīva* must firmly believe in the protection of the feet of Vallabhācārya just as he himself is firm in his reliance on those feet. He goes on to say that all ten toenails on Shri Ācāryajī's feet, which are like lotuses, have a light like toenails that are like *alaukika* jewels; without these toenails everything in all three worlds (the heavenly worlds, earth, and the lower worlds) would seem dark. Furthermore, Sūradāsajī says that, except for refuge in the feet of Shri Ācāryajī, there is no effective means for escape from this *Kali Yuga*. Therefore, why, asks Sūradāsajī,

¹The Braj Bhāṣā phrase is: *caranan kerau Shrī Vallabha*, "the feet of Shri Vallabha"; "Shri Vallabha" is both the name of Vallabhācārya and one of the titles of Shri Kṛṣṇa. See: HARIRĀYAJĪ, p. 412.

should I see any difference between Shri Govardhanadhara and Shri Ācāryajī? Only an ignorant person sees any difference between Shri Krṣṇa and Shri Svāminījī;¹ similarly, only an ignorant person sees any difference between Shri Govardhanadhara and Shri Ācāryaji. Sūradāsajī next says that he is Shri Ācāryaji's unpaid servant. By "unpaid servant" he means that he serves only out of *bhāva* and not for material benefit. Besides, in the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* the *gopīs* are called "unsalaried servants". An unsalaried servant is, of course, an *alaukika* servant since all *laukika* (wordly) servants demand money. Whoever does devotion to Prabhu in expectation of divinely-granted rewards is a salaried servant and does not practise the best *bhakti*. *Bhakti* that is done without desire for reward is the best *bhakti* and one who does this kind of *bhakti* is called an *alaukika* servant. So it was that Shri Bhagavān said in the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*: "Let your worship always be done without desire for receiving anything in return from me; then I will always remain your debtor." This kind of attitude is characteristic of unsalaried servants.² So Sūradāsajī sang that *pada*. In this one *kīrtana* is the essence of all of Sūradāsajī's hundred-thousand *kīrtanas*.]

Then Caturbhujadāsa was very pleased and Shri Gusāñjī and all of the Vaiṣṇavas said that Sūradāsajī had great *alaukika bhāva* in his heart. It was for that reason that Shri Ācāryajī called Sūradāsajī "Ocean".³ Just as the ocean is unfathomable, so is the heart of Sūradāsajī unfathomable. Then, Caturbhujadāsa said: "Sūradāsajī! No one but you can express *alaukika bhāva*. Now, please summarize for us the nature of Shri Ācāryajī's *Puṣṭibhaktimārga* and tell us in what manner the *rasa* of the *Puṣṭimārga* may be experienced. Sūradāsajī then sang a *pada* in answer to the request of Caturbhujadāsa.

[*Bhāvaprakāsha*

In the *pada* which he sang for Caturbhujadāsa and the other Vaiṣṇavas, Sūradāsa gave the following instruction: One should worship Prabhu with the *bhāva* that was expressed by the *gopīs*; this *bhāva* felt by the *gopīs* is a variety of *sakhī bhāva*⁴ through which one may worship Shri Govardhanadhara. The proficiency (*adhikāra*) of the *sakhīs* is in *nikuñja līlā*.⁵ Even ten million kinds of Vedic methods (for achieving spiritual success) are not worth a single kind of *sevā*.

¹See pp. 90–91 of Part I above.

²See *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* X:31:1–9, translated into English in: VYASA, IV, 129.

³See p. 120 above.

⁴See pp. 89–90 of Part I above.

⁵See p. 134 above and p. 12 of Part I above.

For example, when the sixteen thousand sages (*r̄sis*) were enraptured with delight when they beheld the form of Rāmacandrajī¹ in the Dañdaka Forest and wanted Rāmacandrajī to remain there with them. Rāmacandrajī told them that their desires would be satisfied completely when, in future births, they would be born as *gopīs* in Braj and would fall in love with the divine Kṛṣṇa.

Sūradāsa, in his *pada*, goes on to say that the proficiency of women is not in the performance of Vedic rites and sacrifices; the primary proficiency (*adhikāra*) of *sakhī bhāva* is in the *līlā* of Shri Kṛṣṇa. The rule of the *bhaktimārga* is opposite to the rule of the *Veda*. In the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* the *Brajbhaktas* at one point wore clothes and jewellery that were contrary to the clothes and jewellery that they were supposed to wear.² In the eyes of the world, those *Brajbhaktas* would have been considered insane, but, in terms of love and devotion to the divine, they were supreme. Through their love, they had forgotten the world and were called ignorant in the world; in the *līlā* of Prabhu, however, they were very wise. In the highest *bhaktirasa* there is no rule of Vedic injunctions. When one has such high love, he will find that Shri Thākuraji becomes intensely devoted to him in just the same way that Shri Thākurajī devoted himself to the *gopīs* to the extent that he put himself in their control. True wisdom is the realization that the only control is the control of love and that all else is to be forgotten. This is the *bhakti* of the *Puṣṭimārga* and this is the nature of the *Puṣṭimārga*. This is how Sūradāsajī responded to Caturbhujadāsa.]

Then Sūradāsajī fell silent and Caturbhujadāsa and all of the other Vaiṣṇavas gave great thanks to him. They said that Sūradāsajī had received great divine grace. Then, Shri Gusānijī asked, "Sūradāsajī! Where are your thoughts at this moment?"

In reply, Sūradāsa sang two *padas* on the subject of the love of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa. Then Sūradāsajī, while meditating on the union of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa, left his *laukika* body and entered into the eternal *līlā*. Shri Gusānijī went to Gopālapura. The Vaiṣṇavas gathered together and committed Sūradāsajī's corpse to the flames. Then, they rejoined Shri Gusānijī.

¹Rāmacandrajī was an *avatāra* of the god Viṣṇu who was on earth before Kṛṣṇa's earthly lifetime. Rāmacandrajī's story is given in the *Rāmāyaṇa* of Vālmiki. Rāmacandrajī embodies the ideals of established orthodox order and of absolute obedience to social and religious law; consequently, he is nearly always approached through *dāsyā bhāva* only and very rarely through *sakhya bhāva*, *madhura bhāva*, or *vātsalya bhāva*. See: DANIELOU, pp. 172-175.

²*Bhāgavata Purāṇa* X:30: 11-30. See VYASA, vol. IV, pp. 126-127.

[*Bhāvaprakāsha*

Sūradāsajī had four names (any one of which may appear in the signature line of a poem composed by him). Shri Ācāryajī called him “Sūra”. Just as a hero (*śūra*) charges into the front ranks in battle and does not lag behind, so did the *bhakti* of Sūradāsajī daily rise to greater and greater heights. Therefore, Shri Ācāryajī called him “Sūra”. Shri Gusānijī called him “Sūradāsa”. Sūradāsajī never failed in his *dāsa-bhāva*. Whenever his experience of divine favour would increase, then his humbleness would also increase. Sūradāsajī never fell into the delusion of egoism. That is why Shri Gusānijī called him “Sūradāsa” (*dāsa* means “slave” or “servant”).¹ The third name applied to Sūradāsajī is “Sūrajadāsa”. Sūradāsajī composed seven thousand *padas* about Shri Svāminijī (i.e., Rādhā) and in them he described *alaukika bhāva*. Shri Svāminijī called him “Sūraja” (*sūraja* means “sun”) because he illuminated the *svarūpa* of the divine just as the sun gives light to the world. For that reason, Sūradāsajī was called “Sūrajadāsa.” The name “Sūrashyāma” appears in the 25,000 *kīrtanas* which Shri Govardhananāthajī composed for Sūradāsajī.² Thus, Sūradāsajī had four names and each of them appeared in his *kīrtanas*.]

Sūradāsajī was always absorbed in mental (*mānasī*) *sevā*;³ therefore, Shri Ācāryajī did not depend upon him in the establishment of the divine *sevā*. For Sūradāsajī the experience of mental *sevā* was the reward of mental *sevā*. He was always absorbed in *līlārasa*. The fundamental and most important doctrine of the *vārtā* of Sūradāsajī is that there is nothing equal to humility and there is no virtue equal to the devotion of oneself to the service of others. Sūradāsajī went to great difficulty for the merchant⁴ and it was through Sūradāsajī’s efforts that the merchant was accepted by Bhagavān and delivered from worldly ignorance.

Shri Ācāryajī, Shri Gusānijī, and all of the Vaiṣṇavas were very pleased with Sūradāsajī. Sūradāsajī had answered those who had come to him with questions; he had given instruction in the way (*mārga*) of humbleness; he had fixed the minds of all of the Vaiṣṇavas on Prabhu. It is very difficult to become a *Bhagavadīya* equal to Sūradāsajī. He was the recipient of the grace of Shri Ācāryajī Mahāprabhu. There can be no end to the *vārtā* told about him.

¹See p. 88, Part I above.

²See p. 133 above.

³See p. 51 in Part I above.

⁴See pp. 127–131, *prasaṅga* 8, above.

The *Vārtā* of Paramānandadāsa

[The *vārtā* of Paramānandadāsa¹ opens with a *bhāvaprakāsha* in which Harirāyajī explains the *ādhidaivika* identity and the *ādhibhautika* birth of Paramānandadāsa.]

Now the *bhāva* of the *vārtā* of Paramānandadāsa will be described. Paramānanda Svāmī,² who was a Kanaujīya Brāhmaṇa from the city of Kanauja,³ was a *sevaka* of Shrī Ācāryajī Mahāprabhu and a member of the *Aṣṭachāpa* school of poets.

In *līlā*, Paramānandadāsajī is the *sakhā* called Toka, who is one of the eight *sakhās* of Shrī Kṛṣṇa. In order to participate in the *nikuñja* (grove) *līlā*, Toka assumes the form of the *sakhī* named Candrabhāgā. Paramānandadāsajī, as Tokasakhā, is in charge of the gate into Girirāja that is over by Surabhīkuṇḍa.⁴

Paramānandadāsa was born into a family of Kanaujīya Brāhmaṇas living in the city of Kanauja. On the same day that Paramānandadāsa was born, a prosperous merchant gave a large financial present to Paramānandadāsa's father. This moved Paramānandadāsa's father to say: "Shrī Thākurajī has given me both money and my first son; he has been very generous to me today. My new son is a bringer of wonderful fortune and his birth has brought me great joy; therefore, I will bestow upon him the name 'Paramānandadāsa'."⁵ When Paramānandadāsa's father

¹HARIRĀYAJĪ, Caurāsī Vaiṣṇavan kī Vārtā [Tīn Janma kī Līlā Bhāvanāvālī], ed. Dvārakā-dāsa Parīkha (Mathurā: Dvārkādāsa Parīkha, 1961), pp. 416–447.

²Paramānandadāsa's name was originally either "Paramānanda" or "Paramānanda-dāsa"; later, when he began to acquire followers, people called him "Paramānanda Svāmī." For metrical reasons Paramānandadāsa has called himself by the following names in the signature lines of his poems: Paramānandadāsa, Paramānanda, Paramānanda Svāmī, and Dāsaparamānanda. See: GOVARDHANA NĀTHA SHUKLA, Kavivara Paramānandadāsa aur Vallabha Sampradāya (Aligarh : Bhārata Prakāshana Mandira, 1964), p. 55.

³Kanauja is the ancient Kānyakubja; Kanauja (sometimes written "Kannauja") is about 50 miles to the north-west of Kānpur in Utter Pradesh.

⁴See pp. 134–135 above.

⁵Paramānanda means "supreme joy"; it is also a title used for Bhagavān Shrī Kṛṣṇa.

had decided upon Paramānandadāsa as the name for his first-born son, the Brāhmaṇas who had been invited to come and explain the significance of the time of the new child's birth announced that the name Paramānandadāsa occurred in the infant's horoscope. This news made Paramānandadāsa's father still happier. Paramānandadāsa's father had the proper birth ceremony performed and gave away gifts lavishly. As Parainānandadāsa grew older, his father continued to have all of the correct ceremonies—such as that of the investiture of the sacred thread of the Aryan *varṇas*—provided, always with much celebration, for him.

Paramānandadāsa was a great *Bhagavadīya* who had received divine favour and who was an intimate *sakhā* of Shri Thākurajī and a participant in Shri Thākurajī's *lilā*. At the same time that Shri Ācāryajī appeared, by the command of Shri Govardhananāthajī, on earth in order to bring about the deliverance (*uddhāra*) of the *daivī jivas*, Shri Thākurajī (i.e., Shri Govardhananāthajī) himself and all of his retinue also appeared on earth. It was just as Gopāladāsajī said in his poem entitled *Vallabhākhhyāna*: "Many persons appeared in the various regions of India in order to bring down divine grace. . . ."¹ Paramānandadāsa, who passed a very happy childhood in Kanauja, was a member of the retinue of Shri Thākurajī that became manifest on earth. By the time that Paramānandadāsa had grown up, he had composed and sung a great number of *padas*. People began to call him *Svāmī* and many men became his *sevakas*. His great skill as a poet attracted more and more men to him until a large following—with which were several very talented persons—had gathered around him. At about this time, a great catastrophe befell Kanauja: the governor of the city suddenly went berserk and ravaged all the villages under his authority. In the course of this upheaval, Paramānandadāsa's father was looted of all of his wealth. Paramānandadāsa's parents sorrowfully had to tell him that, since they had lost all of their money, they could not afford to get him a wife and, furthermore, that he would have to start making his own way in life because they could no longer support him. They assured him, however, that, since he was a virtuous youth, he would soon be able to acquire enough wealth to allow them to arrange a marriage for him. But Paramānandadāsa answered his mother and father in these words: "Don't worry about making a marriage for me. I don't feel that there is any use in making a great exertion for the sake of acquiring money. Wealth always eventually vanishes.

¹Gopāladāsa, who wrote the *Vallabhākhhyāna* in Gujarātī, was a follower of Shri Gusāṇi Viṭṭalanātha. For more information about him, see: NIRĀṄJANADEVĀ SHARMĀ (ed.), *Dosau Bāvana Vaiṣṇavan kī Vārtā* (Mathurā: Shri Govardhana Granthamālā Kāryālaya, 1966), pp. 76–77. BHAI MANIL C. PAREKH, *Sri Vallabhacharya Life, Teachings and Movement* (Rajkot: Sri Bhagavata Dharma Mission, 1943), p. 322.

The only profit gained through the acquisition of wealth is the ability to give food to Vaiṣṇavas and Brāhmaṇas. I will never try to obtain money. You will always have food to eat just as I do, so, now that you have been freed of your riches, give up the seductive delusion of wealth; concentrate only on the name of Śrī Ṭhākuraji.”¹

In reply to Paramānandadāsa, Paramānandadāsa’s father said: “You can think like this because you have become a *vairāgī*² and your friends are all *vairāgīs*, but I am a householder. How could my family survive if I did not replenish my wealth? I need money to spend for my family and my relatives.”

Later, Paramānandadāsa’s father went to the east in search of a new fortune and, when he was not successful there, he turned towards the south. He had better luck in the south and moved his household to that part of the country. Meanwhile, Paramānandadāsa, who had an extraordinary talent for singing, continued to compose *kīrtanas*. He became famous in all of the surrounding villages.

At this point begin the *prasāngas* of Paramānandadāsa’s *vārtā*.

Prasāṅga 1

Once, Paramānandadāsa left Kanauja and went to settle in Prayāga.³ Many people used to go to the place where he was staying in Prayāga in order to hear the *kīrtanas* which he was continually composing. At that particular time, Śrī Ācāryajī was living across the Yamunā River from Prayāga in the village of Adela. When people from Adela went into Prayāga on business and happened to hear Paramānandadāsa singing his *kīrtanas*, they were very favourably impressed and, when they returned to Adela, they told Śrī Ācāryajī that a man named Paramānandadāsa who was from Kanauja had been building up an excellent reputation as a *kīrtana* singer in Prayāga. When Śrī Ācāryajī had received these reports about Paramānandadāsa, he explained that Paramānandadāsa was a highly talented and virtuous *daivī jīva*.⁴

Among the *sevakas* of Śrī Ācāryajī was a Kṣatriya named Kapūra, who was very fond of music, who had the duty of attending to the filling of Śrī Navanītapriyaji’s⁵ water-jug. Kapūra Kṣatriya also heard about Paramānandadāsa and thought to himself. “If I try to slip away without Śrī Ācāryajī’s knowledge to go hear Paramānanda Svāmī, Śrī Ācāryajī

¹A common form of Hindu worship is the continual meditation on the name of one’s deity.

²A *vairāgī* is an individual who has completely given up all worldly concerns; see Part I, pp. 31–34 and the following: SHUKLA, p. 58.

³Prayāga, located at the conflux of the Gangā and Yamunā rivers, is an ancient holy city; it is today called Allāhbād.

⁴See Part I, pp. 71–72.

⁵See note 3 on p. 116 above.

may hear me and angrily tell me that I cannot leave my *sevā* to go to Prayāga." But, even such thoughts did not dampen Kapūra Kṣatriya's desire to hear Paramānandadāsa sing *kīrtanas*.

[*Bhāvaprakāsha*

In *līlā*, as has already been stated above, Paramānandadāsa is the *sakhī* named Candrabhāgā. Kapūra Kṣatriya, who wanted so badly to hear Paramānandadāsa's singing, was in *līlā* a *sakhī* of Candrabhāgā; that is why he wanted so much to hear Paramānandadāsa. Kapūra Kṣatriya's name in *līlā* was Sonajuhī. Kapūra Kṣatriya was born on earth in the village of Sudāmāpuri in the house of a Kṣatriya who was a notorious rake. Kapūra Kṣatriya's father used to enjoy pursuing the wives of other men. Although Kapūra Kṣatriya's father had at one time been quite rich, it was not long before he had completely dissipated his wealth through his lustful ways. When the local ruler, as has already been mentioned in connection with Paramānandadāsa's youth, went on the rampage, Kapūra's parents lost all of their property along with everyone else in Sudāmāpuri, but, in addition to the material loss, Kapūra and his parents were also thrown into prison. Kapūra Kṣatriya's father was somehow able to bribe one of the prison guards to allow him to escape with his family and, one night, Kapūra and his mother and father all fled from the jail. After Kapūra and his parents had been travelling for several days, they entered a wild forest. In the forest, a tiger killed Kapūra's mother and father but spared Kapūra himself. Kapūra Kṣatriya was soon too grief-stricken and too hungry and thirsty to go on any further and so he sat down there in the forest and began to weep. At just that moment, Śrī Ācāryaji, who had entered that dense forest while in the course of one of his pilgrimages around India,¹ came upon Kapūra Kṣatriya and asked him who he was and why he was sitting alone in the forest crying. The Kapūra Kṣatriya threw himself before Śrī Ācāryaji and told him his whole story. When Śrī Ācāryaji had heard Kapūra's story, he had Kṛṣṇadāsa Meghana, one of his followers, quickly bring some *prasāda* and some water for the boy to eat and drink. When these things had been brought, Śrī Ācāryaji washed the boy and then fed him *prasāda* and gave him water to drink. Thus, Śrī Ācāryaji saved Kapūra Kṣatriya's life. When Kapūra had recovered somewhat, he begged Śrī Ācāryaji to take him along with him and he vowed that he would be Śrī Ācāryaji's slave for life. Śrī Ācāryaji told Kapūra not to worry and promised that he would take care of him. At the time when

¹See Part I.

these events occurred, Kapūra was only fourteen years old. That is how Kapūra Kṣatriya came to join Shrī Ācāryajī. Later, Shrī Ācāryajī administered the *Brahmasambandha* rite to Kapūra and gave him the *sevā* of drawing water and carrying it wherever it might be needed. After some time, when Shrī Ācāryajī and his party reached Adela, Kapūra Kṣatriya had *darshana* of Shrī Navanītapriyajī and felt deep inner satisfaction. After he had had *darshana*, he said, "I used to be without any god, but Shrī Ācāryajī had mercy on me, took me into his care, and kept me with him; now I have had *darshana* of Shrī Navanītapriyajī snug in the lap of Shrī Yashodā." Then was Kapūra Kṣatriya's mind firmly fixed on the *svarūpa* of Shrī Navanītapriyajī and then Kapūra thought to himself, "I want to perform some kind of *sevā* for Shrī Navanītapriyajī; I want to do his *sevā* forever and I want to have *darshana* of him constantly." Now, Shrī Ācāryajī is the manifestation of the Divine Being, so he knew what was passing through the mind of Kapūra Kṣatriya. Therefore, he summoned Kapūra and said to him, "I know that you want to do *sevā* and that you have been divinely blest; so, I am going to give you the *sevā* of keeping Shrī Navanītapriyajī's water-jug full." Upon hearing this, Kapūra was overjoyed and thanked Shrī Ācāryajī again and again for having fulfilled his desire to do *sevā* for Shrī Navanītapriyajī. After that, that Kṣatriya Vaiṣṇava affectionately kept Shrī Navanītapriyajī's water fresh. He became a familiar of Shrī Navanītapriyajī. But his *sevā* gave him no free time to go to hear Paramānanda Svāmī sing *kīrtanas*.]

On the eleventh day of one month,¹ a Vaiṣṇava from Prayāga who was a follower of Shrī Ācāryajī came to Adela for *darshana* of Shrī Ācāryajī. When Kapūra Kṣatriya, Shrī Navanītapriyajī's water-carrier, asked that Vaiṣṇava for news of Paramānanda Svāmī, that Vaiṣṇava said that a group of listeners always gathered around Paramānanda Svāmī at about eight o'clock at night and, furthermore, that, since that day was the eleventh of the month, Paramānanda Svāmī would stay awake and sing all night long. When Kapūra heard this, he decided that he would take advantage of this opportunity to go over to Prayāga to hear Paramā-

¹Each Indian month is divided into two sections (*pakṣas*) of 15 days each. Since ancient times the eleventh day of each *pakṣa* of each month has been observed as a day of fasting by people from all of the castes, classes, and religious sects of Hindu India. There is no single explanation why the eleventh day should be a fastday; some say that the custom started for reasons of health, others that the observance has an astrological basis, and still others find reasons for the fast in Hindu mythology. The fast of the eleventh day—called *ekādashi*—is given great importance by both Vaiṣṇavas and Shaivas. As illustrated by this *prasanga*, the fast of *ekādashi* included for many an all-night vigil from the evening of the eleventh day to the dawn of the twelfth day. See: RĀMAPRATĀPA TRIPĀṬHĪ, *Hinduoṇ ke Vrata, Parva, aur Tyauhāra* (Allāhbād : Lokabhāratī Prakāshana, 1966), pp. 347–352.

nanda Svāmī sing *kīrtana* that night while Shri Ācāryajī was asleep. Consequently, when night fell, after Kapūra had finished his duties to Shri Navanītapriyajī and after he had listened in the evening to teachings from Shri Ācāryajī's holy mouth, he set out from Adela towards the *ghāṭa* from which he could cross the river to Prayāga. Kapūra realized that he would have to swim across the river since at that hour no boat would be available at the *ghāṭa*; fortunately, he was a very good swimmer. Since the day had been hot, Kapūra was wearing nothing but a small *dhoti*¹ which he could tie around his head for the swim across the river. When Kapūra reached the other side of the Yamunā, he made his way to the place where Paramānanda Svāmī was to sing his *kīrtanas*. Since Kapūra had never before met Paramānanda Svāmī, he sat down at a distance from the poet. Soon, the Prayāga Vaiṣṇava—who was sitting right beside Paramānanda Svāmī—with whom Kapūra had talked about the *kīrtana* meeting earlier in the day noticed Kapūra and invited him to come and sit down with him. After some other poets had sung *kīrtanas* for a while, Paramānanda Svāmī himself began to sing. He sang on the theme of *viraha*.²

[*Bhāvaprakāsha*

Paramānanda Svāmī sang of *viraha* because, at this time, he was still separated from *līlā*. He had not yet had *darshana* of Shri Govardhanānāthajī and Shri Ācāryaji. As soon as Shri Ācāryajī has had Paramānanda Svāmī have *darshana* of Shri Nāthajī, Paramānanda Svāmī will know about *līlā* and not before. This is one of the doctrines of Shri Ācāryajī's *Puṣṭimārga*: Shri Thākurajī will have mercy on one who associates with *Bhagavadiyas*. Therefore, in order that he might show his grace to Paramānanda Svāmī, Shri Ācāryajī caused Kapūra, a *Bhagavadiya* whom he had favoured, to go to Paramānanda Svāmī (though Kapūra did not realize that Shri Ācāryajī had sent him to Paramānanda Svāmī). Kapūra Kṣatriya the water-carrier for Shri Navanītapriyajī was such a perfect *bhakta* that Shri Thākurajī would not leave his side even for a moment and stayed with him always. It is just as Sūradāsajī sang in the line from one of his *padas* that goes: "(Shri Kṛṣṇa), pitifully afraid of separation from his devotee, has begun to run (after his devotee)..." and as was stated in Jagannātha Josī's *vārtā*:³ "When the Rajput drew his sword, Shri Thākurajī himself appeared behind the Rajput and seized his sword-arm with such a mighty grip that it could not move ..."; furthermore, there are many places in the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*

¹A *dhoti* is a single, unsewn piece of cloth worn around the waist by Indian men.

²For a discussion of *viraha* see p. 91 above, Part I.

³HARIRĀYAJĪ, pp. 167–171.

where Shri Thākurajī is described as being in the company of *Bhagavadiya* Vaiṣṇavas. Paramānandadāsa was suffering from separation from Shri Thākurajī, so he always sang *kīrtanas* on the theme of *viraha*.]

All through the night, Paramānandadāsa sang *kīrtanas*. Finally, at an hour before dawn, the *kīrtana* singing stopped and each person returned to his own house. Kapūra saluted Paramānanda Svāmī in the name of Bhagavān and got up to leave. Kapūra was still delightedly thinking of the *kīrtanas* that Paramānanda Svāmī had composed and of the wonderful skill with which he had sung them as he swam across the Yamunā to the Adela shore. Still pure and untouched by anyone after his swim in the sacred river, he went to have *darshana* of Shri Ācāryajī, who had just got up, and then returned to his *sevā* of filling Shri Navanītāpriyajī's water-jug.

[*Bhāvaprakāsha*

Kapūra Kṣatriya went to hear Paramānanda Svāmī's *kīrtanas* in order to bring divine mercy to Paramānanda Svāmī. Why else would a *Bhagavadīya* who is the familiar of Shri Thākurajī go to visit another person? It was destined that the divine mercy should come to Paramānanda Svāmī; so, Shri Navanītāpriyajī had turned Kapūra's mind towards Paramānanda Svāmī and then had gone with him to Prayāga and had sat in his lap listening to Paramānanda Svāmī's *kīrtanas*.]

At the same time that Kapūra was returning to Adela from Prayāga after the night spent listening to Paramānanda Svāmī sing *kīrtanas*, Paramānanda Svāmī himself, exhausted from the night's singing, had lain down to sleep.

[*Bhāvaprakāsha*

Some may wonder why Paramānanda Svāmī went to sleep just before the end of the night and did not stay up an hour longer so that he could obtain the benefits that come to one only if one can stay awake for the entire night on the eleventh day of each half of the month. Paramānanda Svāmī was certainly wise and well-informed; he knew very well that his going to sleep before the end of the night meant that he would not obtain the benefits that come to those who stay awake all night on the eleventh days of each month. In dispelling the doubt that may be felt on this point, it is necessary to remember that Paramānanda Svāmī was a *pusṭi-jīva*¹ with a place

¹See pp. 71-75 in Part I above.

in *lilā*. As a *puṣṭi-jīvā*, Paramānanda Svāmī desired only Shri Ṭhākurajī; he had no desire for the benefits of ritual observances. Paramānanda Svāmī used the custom of observing the eleventh days of each month by staying awake all night as nothing more than a pretext to stay awake most of the night to glorify the divine name with *kirtanas*. But he knew that he could not stay awake for the entire night if he wanted to avoid being sleepy on the following night when he wanted to glorify Shri Ṭhākurajī with at least five hours of *kirtana* singing. Paramānanda Svāmī would much rather lose the benefits—for which he had no desire—gained by completion of a rite than lose the chance to sing *kirtanas* for Shri Ṭhākurajī. That is why Paramānanda Svāmī went to sleep an hour before the end of the night.]

As Paramānanda Svāmī was sleeping, he dreamt. In his dream he saw a Kṣatriya *sevaka* of Shri Ācāryajī sitting awake in the night. He also saw Shri Navanītapriyajī sitting in that Kṣatriya's lap. In the dream, Paramānandadāsa saw Shri Navanītapriyajī smile and heard him say, "I have heard your *kirtanas* tonight. Kapūra Kṣatriya, a *sevaka* who has received the favour of Shri Ācāryajī, came to you tonight and stayed awake all night. I came with him. Out of all the possible nights that I could have come, I chose this night to hear your *kirtanas*."

[*Bhāvaprakāsha*

Since Shri Ṭhākurajī hears everything and is present everywhere, some people may wonder why Shri Navanītapriyajī said, "I have heard your *kirtanas* tonight." Shri Ṭhākurajī, through his form as the *antaryāmin*,¹ had heard that, after many days had passed, the right time for Paramānanda Svāmī's divine acceptance had come. Paramānanda Svāmī had been accepted and had been given divine favour. That is why Shri Navanītapriyajī said to him, "I have heard your *kirtanas* tonight." Shri Navanītapriyajī had given Paramānanda Svāmī full favour and he wanted Paramānanda Svāmī to come to him immediately.]

Even after Paramānanda Svāmī had awokened from his sleep, the *svarūpa* of Shri Navanītapriyajī—who is more radiant than ten million Kāmadevas²—which he had seen in his dream-darshana still filled his eyes. So it was that true knowledge appeared in his eyes and in his heart. Paramānanda Svāmī's mind was agitated and he felt perplexed. He

¹See pp. 76–78 in Part I above.

²Kāmadeva is the Hindu god of love. See ALAIN DANIELOU, *Hindu Polytheism* (New York : Bollingen Foundation, 1964), pp. 312–313.

thought to himself. "When can I have *darshana* of Shri Navanītāpriyājī? I have many times passed the night awake singing *kīrtanas*, but I have never experienced *darshana* like the *darshana* that I received today. Kāpūra Kṣatriya, who is Shri Navanītāpriyājī's water-carrier and Shri Ācāryājī's *sevaka*, came and Shri Navanītāpriyājī was seated in his lap; obviously I will not be able to have *darshana* of Shri Navanītāpriyājī without the help of Kāpūra Kṣatriya. I will go to him and, by association with him, my desires will be fulfilled." With these thoughts in his mind, Paramānanda Svāmī jumped up and set off towards Adela. It was just at dawn and Paramānanda Svāmī reached the riverbank just as the first ferry of the day was ready to cross. He got into the boat and so went across the river. As Paramānanda Svāmī reached the Adela shore, he saw Shri Ācāryājī, who had just finished bathing in the holy river, performing his morning devotions. Paramānanda Svāmī's *darshana* of Shri Ācāryājī was extraordinarily *alaukika*, for to Paramānanda Svāmī Shri Ācāryājī appeared as the *svarūpa* of Shri Kṛṣṇa. It was just as Shri Gusāñjī wrote in his *Vallabhāṣṭaka*: "(Shri Vallabhācāryājī) is, indeed, actually Kṛṣṇa."¹ Upon receiving this marvellous *darshana*, Paramānanda Svāmī was completely dumbstruck and could say absolutely nothing. In his mind he thought, "Did not Shri Navanītāpriyājī sit in Kāpūra Kṣatriya's lap in order to listen to my *kīrtanas*? With Kāpūra Kṣatriya's help, I may be blest with the company of Shri Ācāryājī. Although I am most unworthy, I, too, will try to become Shri Ācāryājī's *sevaka*. I will beg to be accepted as his *sevaka*. I must find Kāpūra Kṣatriya again and tell him all of my hopes and ask him to help me become Shri Ācāryājī's *sevaka*." As Paramānanda Svāmī was thinking these thoughts, Shri Ācāryājī suddenly commanded: "Paramānandadāśa! Sing about the *līlā* of Bhagavān." When Paramānandadāśajī had received the order given by Shri Ācāryājī, he prostrated himself in homage and sang three *padas* on the theme of *viraha*. When Shri Ācāryājī had heard the three *padas*, he said, "Paramānandadāśa! Sing a *pada* on the theme of the *līlā* of the child Kṛṣṇa (*bālalilā*)" To this request, Paramānandadāśa could only fold his hands humbly and say, "Mahārāja! I don't know anything about the childhood *līlā* of Shri Kṛṣṇa."

Upon receiving this reply, Shri Ācāryājī said, "Go and bathe in the Yamunā and then come back here. I will give you instruction."

Paramānandadāśa then respectfully inquired, "Mahārāja! Where is your *sevaka* Kāpūra Kṣatriya?"

Shri Ācāryājī answered, "He is probably attending to the duties of his *seva*."

¹ Viṭṭhalanātha's *Shrivallabhāṣṭakam*, verse 8; see: SHRIMĀDHAVA SHARMĀ (ed.), *Puṣṭi-mārgiya Stotraratnamālā* (2 vols.; Vārāṇasī: Paramānanda Sharmā, 1963), vol. I, p. 108.

At that time, Shri Ācāryajī had to go quickly to the temple to conduct the *sevā*. Meanwhile, Paramānandadāsa went down to the Yamunā to bathe. Just as he reached the river, Kapūra Kṣatriya also arrived at the riverbank in order to fill Shri Navanītāpriyajī's pitcher with water from the Yamunā. When Paramānanda Svāmī saw Kapūra Kṣatriya, he felt a surge of joy, folded his hands and greeted Kapūra Kṣatriya in the name of Bhagavān, and said: "Last night when you showed favour to me and came to the place where I was singing, Shri Navanītāpriyajī sat in your lap to hear my *kīrtanas*. Then, when I lay down and slept, Shri Navanītāpriyajī gave me *darshana* and told me that he had heard my *kīrtanas* that night. You have brought me this wonderful favour and now I have received *darshana* of you. Now, please take pity on me and tell me how I may take shelter with Shri Ācāryajī and receive unending *darshana* of Shri Thākurajī. Furthermore, Shri Ācāryajī has favoured me by granting me *darshana* of himself as the *svarūpa* of Shri Kṛṣṇa. All of this has come to me through association with you."

In reply, Kapūra Kṣatriya said, "You received such a wonderful *darshana* because you are being favoured by Shri Ācāryajī. Now he wants you to seek shelter with him, so go and bathe quickly and then go to him without letting anyone touch you. When, through Shri Ācāryajī, you have received Prabhu's favour and taken refuge with him, all of your hopes will be fulfilled. But don't tell Shri Ācāryajī that I went to hear you sing *kīrtana* last night; Shri Ācāryajī would be very angry with me if he should find out that I left my *sevā* here and went to Prayāga."

As soon as Paramānandadāsa had bathed and Kapūra Kṣatriya had filled his pitcher with Yamunā water for Shri Navanītāpriyajī, the two of them—Paramānandadāsa following Kapūra Kṣatriya and keeping himself unpolluted by contact with other people—started back to meet Shri Ācāryajī. At that time, Shri Ācāryajī had just dressed Shri Navanītāpriyajī for the day and was in the process of offering him food. When Paramānandadāsa arrived, Shri Ācāryajī told him to sit down and wait for a short while. After the food offering had been completed, Shri Ācāryajī summoned Paramānandadāsa into the presence of Shri Navanītāpriyajī and there gave him the divine name and had him take the *Brahmasam-bandha* rite. After Paramānandadāsa had been initiated into Shri Ācāryajī's *Sampradāya*, Shri Ācāryajī gave him instruction in his *Anukramanikā* on the tenth *skandha* of the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*.¹

[*Bhāvaprakāsha*

When Shri Ācāryajī asked Paramānandadāsa to sing a *pada* describing one of the *līlās* performed by Bhagavān Shri Kṛṣṇa, Para-

¹The full title of Vallabhācārya's *Anukramanikā* is: *Bhāgavata-Purāṇa-Dashamaskandhānukramanikā*. See note 4 on p. 113 above.

mānandadāsa complied by singing a *pada* on the theme of *viraha*. Shri Ācāryajī then asked Paramānandadāsa to sing about the childhood *lilā* of Shri Kṛṣṇa. The childhood *lilā* is the *lilā* which Shri Kṛṣṇa performed as a boy living in the house of his foster-father King Nanda. The *rasa* of the childhood *lilā* is that of *samyoga* (union with Shri Kṛṣṇa) and not of *viyoga* (separation from Shri Kṛṣṇa).¹ The result of the experience of *samyoga* is *viraha*.² For example, in the “Rāsapañcādhyāī”³ Shri Kṛṣṇa summoned the *Brajbhaktas* (i.e., the *gopīs*) for the performance of the *rāsa lilā*; but, after a time, Shri Kṛṣṇa vanished and the *gopīs* were left to experience the grief of *viraha*. For the *gopīs*, *viraha* was the result of the *samyoga* of the *rāsa lilā*. In the same vein, Bhagavān said: “Consider true wealth to be in the loss of acquired riches.” But why did Shri Ācāryajī ask Paramānandadāsa to sing about the childhood *lilā*? He did so because when one has experienced the childhood *lilā*—in which is *samyoga rasa*, then one will immediately understand *viraha*. When Paramānandadāsa answered that he knew nothing about Shri Kṛṣṇa’s childhood *lilā*, he meant that he had not experienced the *rasa* of *samyoga*. Since Paramānandadāsa had been separated from the divine *lilā*, he had forgotten his role as a participant in that *lilā*; nevertheless, he was still a *daivī jīva* and had, therefore, been experiencing *viraha* from the moment of his birth.⁴ As soon as Shri Ācāryajī gave Paramānandadāsa the *mantra* of the divine name and caused him to dedicate himself by means of the *Brahmasambandha* rite to Shri Kṛṣṇa, the ignorance that had been hindering Paramānandadāsa was dissipated. When Shri Ācāryajī gave Paramānandadāsa instruction in his *Anukramaṇikā* on the tenth *skandha* of the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*, all of the *lilās* of the tenth *skandha* were experienced by Paramānandadāsa in the presence of Shri Navanītapriyajī. The *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* is the greatest of all

¹See p. 91 of Part I above.

²In order to experience and express the highest degree of love (*prema*) for Shri Kṛṣṇa, the *bhakta* following the *Puṣṭimārga* taught by Vallabhācārya wants to feel both the bliss of union (*samyoga*) with Shri Kṛṣṇa and the pain of separation (*viraha* or *viyoga*) from Shri Kṛṣṇa. The *prema* of a *bhakta* cannot be complete without experience of both union and separation. Clearly, the experience of separation (*viraha*) cannot be fully appreciated and thoroughly experienced unless it has been preceded by union (*samyoga*), nor can *samyoga* be perfectly enjoyed without the experience of the *viraha* that follows it. Thus, *samyoga* must eventually be replaced by *viraha* and *viraha* by *samyoga*. That is why Harirāyajī says in this *bhāvaprakāsha* that the result of *samyoga* is *viraha*. See : SHUKLA, pp. 245–246.

³See note 2 on p. 134 above.

⁴Even though Paramānandadāsa, in appearing on earth, had forgotten his union with Shri Kṛṣṇa as Shri Kṛṣṇa’s *sakhā* in the eternal *lilā*, he could never forget the sorrow of separation (*viraha*) from Shri Kṛṣṇa. He was, as Harirāyajī says in his *bhāvaprakāsha*, born suffering from *viraha*.

books and is a veritable ocean of the nectar of immortality; by means of his *Anukramanikā*, Shrī Ācāryajī established that *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* ocean in the heart of Paramānandadāsa in just the same way that he had a few years before fixed it in the heart of Sūradāsa.¹ Many Vaiṣṇavas received Shrī Ācāryajī's favour, but only two—Sūradāsa and Paramānandadāsa—became “oceans”. The *kīrtanas* composed by Sūradāsa and Paramānandadāsa are numberless, so both those poets were called “Ocean” (*sāgara*).² After Shrī Ācāryajī had caused Paramānandadāsa's ignorance to be dispelled, Paramānandadāsa became able to experience *samyoga rasa* and so could sing of the childhood *lilā* (*bālalilā*).

Then Paramānandadāsa gave Shrī Ācāryajī great pleasure by singing several *padas* for him on the theme of the childhood *lilā* of Shrī Kṛṣṇa. After his initiation, Paramānandadāsa lived in *Adela* so that he could be close to Shrī Ācāryajī. Shrī Ācāryajī assigned Paramānandadāsa the *sevā* of singing *padas* before Shrī Navanītāpriyajī at each *darshana* period; the assignment was to be permanent. During the periods when Shrī Navanītāpriyajī's shrine was closed,³ Paramānandadāsa used to sit before Shrī Ācāryajī and compose *kīrtanas* about *Brajlilā* while Shrī Ācāryajī discussed the *lilās* of Shrī Kṛṣṇa as he had explained them in his *Subodhini*.⁴ Paramānandadāsa composed *kīrtanas* on the basis of Vallabhācārya's explanations of the *lilās*.

Prasāṅga 2

One time, when Shrī Ācāryajī had been discussing the splendour of the lotus-like feet of Shrī Thākuraṇī, Paramānandadāsa composed a *kīrtana* describing the splendour of the lotus-like feet of Shrī Thākurajī and sang it before Shrī Ācāryajī. In this way, Paramānandadāsa put Shrī Ācāryajī's teachings into *padas*. On another occasion, Paramānandadāsa sang a *pada* on the theme of a prayer for *darshana* of the holy land of Braj; when Shrī Ācāryajī had heard this *pada*, he understood that Paramānandadāsa felt a deep craving for *darshana* of Braj. Moved by Paramānandadāsa's desire, Shrī Ācāryajī began preparing for a journey to Brāj. After a time all was ready and Shrī Ācāryajī set out from Adela for Braj, taking Parmānandadāsa, Dāmodaradāsa Harasānī,⁵ Kṛṣṇadāsa Meghana,⁶

¹See pp. 113–114 above.

²See p. 120 above.

³The *havelis* (temples) of the Vallabha *Sampradāya* are open to the *bhaktas* only during the eight *darshana* periods of the day. During the intervals between *darshana* periods—the intervals are called in Braj Bhāṣā *anosara* and are all, with the exception of the four or five hour *anosara* between the *rājabhoga* and *utthāpana* *darshanas*, about one hour long—the *havelis* are kept closed and no one is allowed to disturb the divine *svarūpa*.

⁴See note 2 on p. 114.

⁵HARIRĀYAJĪ, pp. 2–13.

⁶HARIRĀYAJĪ, pp. 13–21.

Yādavendradāsa,¹ and several other Vaiṣṇavas. On the way to Braj, the party passed through Kanauja where Paramānandadāsa still maintained a house. Paramānandadāsa asked Shri Ācāryajī if the group might stop at his house for a while and, when Shri Ācāryajī accepted the invitation, led the party to his house. After Paramānandadāsa had gotten food and other provisions from the bazar, Shri Ācāryajī saw to the cooking of the food. When the food was ready, he offered it to Shri Thākuraji and then took some for himself. Then he distributed the rest of the food offering as *prasāda* to Paramānandadāsa and the other Vaiṣṇavas. After everyone had received *prasāda* and Shri Ācāryajī had been seated in the place of honour, Shri Ācāryajī asked Paramānandadāsa to sing of the glory of Bhagavān. When Paramānandadāsa had been told to begin singing, he thought to himself, "Since Shri Ācāryajī's mind is probably dwelling on *Brajlīlā* with Shri Govardhananāthajī, I will sing a *pada* of *viraha* in which a moment will pass like a *kalpa*."² Upon hearing the first few words of Paramānandadāsa's *kirtana*—“Hari! I have remembered your *līlā*...”—Shri Ācāryajī was plunged into trancelike absorption in *līlā*.

[*Bhāvaprakāsha*

Shri Ācāryajī became completely absorbed in *līlā* when he heard Paramānandadāsa's *pada*, because his nature is so thoroughly infused with *līlā*. In his *Shrivallabhāṣṭaka*, Shri Gusāñjī described Shri Ācāryajī as being full of the ocean of the *rāsa* and the other *līlās* of Shri Kṛṣṇa;³ and in his *Sarvottama* Shri Gusāñjī described Shri Ācāryajī as being the source for the true meaning of the *rāsa līlā*.⁴]

For three days, Shri Ācāryajī sat unconscious, with his eyes closed, and with no trace of life in his body. Dāmodaradāsa Harasānī and the other Vaiṣṇavas who were familiar with Shri Ācāryajī's nature understood that he was drowned in the experience of *līlā*. All of the Vaiṣṇavas sat still and silent, saying nothing, enjoying *darshana* of Shri Ācāryajī.

[*Bhāvaprakāsha*

Shri Ācāryajī is the Supreme Being himself and so he was not subject to the rule of bodily needs and limitations. He took up a human body in order to perform human actions on earth, but his body had no power over him. Accordingly, each of his *sevakas* waited patiently through the three days that he was lost in *līlā*.]

¹HARIRĀYAJĪ, pp. 144–146.

²A *kalpa* is the period, lasting several millions of years, of one cosmic cycle from manifestation to concealment of the universe.

³Shri Gusāñjī Viṭṭhalanātha's *Shrivallabhāṣṭakam*, verse 1; see: SHARMĀ, vol. I, p. 105.

⁴Shri Gusāñjī Viṭṭhalanātha's *Sarvottama Stotram*, verse 17; see: SHARMĀ, vol. I, p. 100.

All of the Vaiṣnavas rejoiced when, on the fourth day, Śrī Ācāryajī awakened and opened his eyes.

[*Bhāvaprakāsha*

Some may wonder why Śrī Ācāryajī remained absorbed in *rāsa lilā* and the other *lilās* for three days. Three places are of primary importance in the performance of Śrī Thākuraṇī's *lilā*: Govardhana Hill, Bṛndābana, and the Yamunā River. On the first day, he experienced those *lilās*—the various games played in caves—that are connected with Govardhana Hill; on the second day, he experienced the *lilā* associated with Bṛndābana—the *lilās* that took place in the groves (*nikuṇja lilā*) which were full of *rasa*; and, on the third day, he experienced the *lilās* that took place in the Yamunā River—the water play and the *rāsa lilā* (which was performed in the sands along the Yamunā). Thus, Śrī Ācāryajī experienced all three kinds of *rasa* on the three days. On the fourth day, because he still had to bring experience of the *rasa* of *lilā* to the various *jīvas* that he had taken into his protection and for whom he had brought the *bhaktimārga* (i.e., the *Puṣṭimārga*) into being, Śrī Ācāryajī opened his eyes and awakened.]

This experience so frightened Paramānandadāsa that he vowed never again to sing a *pada* like the *pada* that had caused Śrī Ācāryajī to become immersed in *lilā* for three days.

[*Bhāvaprakāsha*

Paramānandadāsa was afraid that Śrī Ācāryajī might become so thoroughly absorbed in *lilā* that he would not return to earth; and if Śrī Ācāryajī should not return to earth, there would be no one able to rescue the *daivī jīvas* on earth. Therefore, Paramānandadāsa decided that he would never again sing a *pada* on the theme of *viraha* before Śrī Ācāryajī. Śrī Ācāryajī is by nature filled with the experience of *viraha*. In his *Sarvottama*, for example, Śrī Gusāṇījī said that Śrī Ācāryajī is “he who teaches that everything is to be given up for the experience of *viraha*.¹ In the state of the experience of *viraha*, there is absolutely no remembrance of *laukika* or *Vedic**affairs.]

Then Śrī Ācāryajī took some food and began to regain his strength. Paramānandadāsa and all of the other Vaiṣnavas took some *prasāda* and Paramānandadāsa sang several *padas* for Śrī Ācāryajī.

When Śrī Ācāryajī told the Vaiṣnavas that it was time for them to resume their journey to Braj, Paramānandadāsa had all of those men

¹Śrī Gusāṇī Viṭṭhalanātha's *Sarvottama Stotram*, verse 18; see: SHARMĀ, vol. I, p. 100.

whom he had, before he entered Shrī Ācāryajī's sect, made his *sevakas* come before Shrī Ācāryajī. When all of these men had assembled, Paramānandadāsa humbly asked Shrī Ācāryajī to accept them into his following.

But, Shrī Ācāryajī said, in answer to Paramānandadāsa's request, "Paramānandadāsa, you have already initiated these men as your *sevakas*; why shculd I now have them leave you and become my *sevakas*?"

Paramānandadāsa replied, "Mahārāja! Formerly, I saw myself as a spiritual master (*svāmī*) and so I accepted *sevakas*, but now I am your servant. The title of "*svāmī*" is excellent for one who is a *svāmī*, but a servant who calls himself "*svāmī*" is a fool. When I was lost in ignorance I accepted *sevakas*, but now I beg you to take those *sevakas* into your protection and bring them deliverance (*uddhāra*)."

At that, Shrī Ācāryajī initiated all of the former *sevakas* of Paramānandadāsa into his *Sampradāya* as his own *sevakas*. Then Shrī Ācāryajī's party left Kanauja; after a few days, the group entered Braj and made its way to Gokula. When Shrī Ācāryajī reached Gokula, he immediately went to Govinda Ghāṭa to bathe in the Yamunā;¹ after he had bathed, Shrī Ācāryajī sat down beneath a large tree where he was accustomed to sit whenever he came to Gokula. At night, he slept in a small house in Gokula which stands near Shrī Dvārakānātha's temple. Both of these places—the one where Shrī Ācāryajī sat during the day and the one where he slept at night—are marked and are places of pilgrimage (*baiṭhaka*) for followers of the teachings of Shrī Ācāryajī. As is described in the *vārtā* of Gajjanadhāvana,² Shrī Ācāryajī and his party celebrated Janmāṣṭamī³ with the throwing of yoghurt and turmeric⁴ and with the rocking of Shrī Navanītāpriyajī in his cradle.⁵ Later, when Shrī Ācāryajī had bathed and sat down beneath the tree in his usual place, Paramānandadāsa and the other Vaiṣṇavas also bathed and went to sit

¹It was at Govinda Ghāṭa at Gokula where Vällabhācārya, on his first tour of Braj, received the *Brahmasambandha* from Shri Kṛṣṇa. See: KANTHAMANI SHĀSTRĪ "VISHARADA", *Kāṅkaroli kā Itihāsa* (Kāṅkaroli: Shrividyā-Vibhāga, 1940), vol. II, p. 65.

²HARIRĀYAJĪ, pp. 100–102.

³Janmāṣṭamī (which is celebrated in some places in India on the eighth day of the dark half of the month of Bhādrapada—August/September and at other places on the eighth day of the dark half of the month of Shrāvaṇa—July/August) is the anniversary of the day on which Kṛṣṇa was born in Mathurā. Janmāṣṭamī is one of the most important holidays for the members of the Vallabhā *Sampradāya* (see p. 49 above). For descriptions of the celebration of Janmāṣṭamī by Hindus in general, see: TRIPĀṬHĪ, pp. 152–154. R. K. TRIVEDI, *Census of India 1961*, Vol. V: Gujarat, Part VII-B, Fairs and Festivals (Delhi: Central Government Publications, 1965), pp. 100–101.

⁴TRIPĀṬHĪ, p. 153.

⁵Shrī Navanītāpriyajī had travelled from Ajela to Gokula with Shrī Ācāryajī and his party of *sevakas*. Today, it is still usual for the *svarūpas* of the *Sampradāya* to be taken on important pilgrimages.

at his feet. On that occasion, Shri Ācāryajī gave Paramānandadāsa instruction in the spiritual importance of the Yamunā River; Shri Ācāryajī based his teaching on his own Sanskrit poem in praise of the Yamunā entitled "Shriyamunāṣṭakam".¹ When Paramānandadāsa heard Shri Ācāryajī's teachings on the Yamunā, his own heart was so filled with love for the Yamunā that he composed three *padas* describing the glory of the Yamunā. Paramānandadāsa gave such great delight to Shri Ācāryajī by singing these *padas* there on the very bank of the Yamunā that Shri Ācāryajī caused him to experience *darshana* of Shri Kṛṣṇa's childhood *līlā* (*bālalīlā*) as it was performed in Gokula. This wonderful *darshana*, in which the *Brajbhaktas* (i.e., the *gopīs* and *gopas* who performed the *Brajlīlā* with Shri Kṛṣṇa) frolicked in the waters of the Yamunā as Shri Thākurajī entertained them with a wide variety of games, was given just for Paramānandadāsa. Such a marvellous and vivid *darshana* inspired Paramānandadāsa to sing *pada* after *pada* to Shri Ācāryajī describing the *darshana* of the divine *bālā līlā* in Gokula which he had enjoyed. This *darshana* caused Paramānandadāsa's heart to be so completely enthralled (*āsakta*) by Gokula that he sang a *pada* in which he pleaded with Shri Ācāryajī to keep him forever in Gokula at his lotus-feet so that he might eternally have *darshana* of Shri Thākurajī and experience of the divine *līlā*. At this, Shri Ācāryajī was most pleased with Paramānandadāsa.²

Prasaṅga 3

After a time, Shri Ācāryajī gathered together Paramānandadāsa and the other Vaiṣṇavas and left Gokula for Govardhana Hill. The group reached Govardhana Hill just in time for the *uthāpana darshana*; Shri Ācāryajī bathed at once and went up the hill and entered Shri Govardhananāthajī's temple. Paramānandadāsa also bathed, then prostrated himself before the sacred hill, and finally ascended the hill to the temple. He entered the temple and attended the *uthāpana darshana*; he was captivated (*āsakta*) by the splendour of the *darshana* of Shri Govardhananāthajī.

At that *darshana*, Shri Ācāryajī told Paramānandadāsa to sing some *kīrtanas* of the divine *līlā* for Shri Govardhananāthajī. Then, Paramānandadāsa thought to himself, "What can I sing? I have only one tongue, while the nature of Shri Govardhananāthajī is infinite and so is the *līlā* that he performed. Furthermore, my mind is held rapt whenever I

¹ Vallabhācārya's "Shriyamunāṣṭakam" is one of the short works included in the *Śodashagrantha*. See : *Sitārāma Caturvedi, Mahāprabhu Śrimadvallabhācārya aur Puṣṭi-Mārga* (Vārāṇasi : Hindī-Sāhitya-Kuṭīra, 1967), pp. 273-277. For a general discussion of the importance of the Yamunā River in the *bhakti* of the *Puṣṭimārga*, see : SHUKLA, pp. 216-218.

² For examples of Paramānandadāsa's *bālalīlā padas*, see : GOvardhāna Nātha SHUKLA, *Paramānanda Sāgara (Pada-Sangraha)* (Aligarh : Bhārata Prakāshana Mandira, 1958), pp. 25-32.

think of any one of his *lilās*. Nevertheless, I must obey Shrī Ācāryajī's command and try to sing. I will sing first of the *lila* of Shrī Thākurajī's assumption of an earthly birth, then I will sing of his *nikuñja lilā*,¹ then I will offer worship to his lotus-like feet, then I will describe his form, and, finally, I will sing of his *lilā* and of his majesty." Paramānandadāsa then sang a *pada* containing all of the things of which he had thought. Later, when Shrī Ācāryajī was performing the final ceremonies before Shrī Govardhananāthajī was put to bed at the conclusion of the *shayana darshana* period, Paramānandadāsa sang still more *kirtanas*. Shrī Ācāryajī was very pleased with the *padas* that Paramānandadāsa sang.

As soon as Shrī Ācāryajī had put Shrī Govardhananāthajī to bed and closed the temple, he went down the hill and told Rāmadāsa the *Bhitariyā*² to have some milk-*prasāda* sent to Paramānandadāsa. Rāmadāsa had the milk-*prasāda* sent to Paramānandadāsa. As Paramānandadāsa began to sip the milk-*prasāda*, he noticed that it was warm. After he had cooled it, he drank it. Later, when Paramānandadāsa came and sat down before Shrī Ācāryajī at the evening assembly for religious instruction, Shrī Ācāryajī asked him how he had liked the milk-*prasāda*. When Paramānandadāsa mentioned that the milk-*prasāda* had been warm when it was brought to him, Shrī Ācāryajī asked the *bhitariyās* why they had offered warm milk to Shrī Govardhananāthajī. He reminded them that the milk to be offered was supposed to be cooled so that it would be refreshing. The *bhitariyās* promised that in the future they would be sure to cool the milk.³

[*Bhāvaprakāsha*

Shrī Ācāryajī had the milk-*prasāda* given to Paramānandadāsa in order to find out whether or not Shrī Thākurajī found the milk-offering well-prepared and rich in flavour. Since Shrī Thākurajī is passionately fond of milk, giving milk as *prasāda* to a Vaiṣṇava *sevaka* who has received Shrī Thākurajī's favour is just like giving him the ecstasy (*rasa*) of union with Shrī Thākurajī in the *nikuñja lila*. If the Vaiṣṇava praises the taste of the milk-*prasāda*, then it may be taken as certain that Shrī Thākurajī is indicating, through that Vaiṣṇava, that he enjoyed the milk.]

Since Paramānandadāsa drank some of the saliva from Shrī Thākurajī's

¹See note 1 on p. 12 in Part I above.

²See the final *bhāvaprakāsha* of the second *prasaṅga* of the *vārtā* of Kṛṣṇadāsa below.

³Since, according to the doctrines of Vallabhācārya, the divine *svarūpas* are actually Shrī Kṛṣṇa himself and not mere representations, they must be served with concern for their comfort. See p. 48 in Part I above and: R. KALĀDHARA BHĀṭṭĀ, *Shrimad-Vallabhācārya ke Dārshanika-Ācāra ki Paramparā* (Ahmadābād : Shrī Nāgaradāsa K. Bāṇbhāniyā, 1965), p. 35.

lips along with the milk,¹ he was plunged into experience of the *rasa* of all of the nocturnal *lilās*. Out of his experience of the nocturnal *lilās* he composed several *padas* on the theme of the play of Rādhā, Shrī Krṣṇa, and the *gopīs*.

At dawn on the next day, Paramānandadāsa sang *padas* while Shrī Ācāryajī awakened Shrī Govardhananāthajī for the *marigalā darshana*. It was then that Shrī Ācāryajī entrusted to Paramānandadāsa the *sevā* of singing *kīrtanas* for Shrī Govardhananāthajī in his temple. Paramānandadāsa was continually composing new *padas* and singing them before Shrī Nāthajī.

Prasāṅga 4

One day, a king who was a *sevaka* of Shrī Ācāryajī arrived with his queen at Govardhana in the course of a pilgrimage to the holy places of Braj. When the king had had *darshana* of Shrī Govardhananāthajī, he hurried back to his tent and told his queen that she must go to Girirāja and enjoy the wondrous *darshana* of Shrī Govardhananāthajī. The queen answered that she would go only if she could remain in purdah while having *darshana*, for, she reminded her husband, it was an iron-bound tradition with their people that aristocratic ladies like herself always remain in purdah. In reply to this, the king said : "Shrī Thākurajī is the lord of Braj; how can you be concerned about purdah in his *darshana*? No one can seclude himself from Shrī Thākurajī." But, in spite of all of the king's arguments, the queen refused to go to *darshana* unless she could go in purdah. Finally, the king went to Shrī Ācāryajī and humbly said : "Mahārāja, I have tried to get the queen to come to Shrī Govardhananāthajī's *darshana*, but she will not agree to come unless she can come in purdah."

Shrī Ācāryajī then said to the king : "Let your wife come in purdah. I will have special *darshana* given for her before it is given for the rest of the people."

As planned, the queen arrived at Shrī Govardhananāthajī's temple and began to have private *darshana* in purdah. As the queen was having *darshana*, Shrī Nāthajī assumed his invisible form (which is called Bhaktoddhāraka, the Deliverer of *bhaktas*) and opened the main gates to his temple. The moment the gates were opened, a great throng of people surged in and burst upon the queen. At that very moment, all of the queen's clothes fell from her body without warning and she was left naked and mortified with shame in the view of all of the people. Later, when the queen told the king what had happened to her, he said : "I

¹Since any *prasāda* is food or drink that has been ingested by the deity to whom it was offered and then given to the devotees of that deity, the *prasāda*-milk that Paramānandadāsa drank naturally contained some of Shrī Thākurajī's saliva.

told you before that Shrī Nāthajī is the lord of Braj and that no one can seclude himself from him."

Paramānandadāsa began to compose a *pada* about this incident and recited the first line of it to Shrī Ācāryajī. The first line of the *pada* that Paramānandadāsa was composing went like this:

Whose play is as marvellous as the play
Of Kṛṣṇa the beguiler who won't let anyone be shy?

When Shrī Ācāryajī had heard this first line, he said to Paramānandadāsa, "Don't say it like that; change it to 'Most marvellous is the splendid play of Kṛṣṇa . . .'"

Paramānandadāsa made the change suggested by Shrī Ācāryajī and finished the poem.

[*Bhāvaprakāsha*

At first, Paramānandadāsa expressed his devotion to Shrī Kṛṣṇa only through *dāsyabhāva*,¹ but, later, through the favour of Prabhu, he experienced his devotion with *sakhya bhāva*.² With divine favour, any *bhāva* may easily be expressed; without divine favour, all attempts to express any *bhāva* will fail. Shrī Ācāryajī centred all of his love on Shrī Govardhananāthajī, for he considered the best approach to the divine to be through love. That is why he did not want Paramānandadāsa to say "Whose play is as marvellous . . ." Instead, he told Paramānandadāsa to say, "Most marvellous is the splendid play . . ." The line that Shrī Ācāryajī suggested expresses the love-filled praise of the *Brajbhaktas*, while the line that Paramānandadāsa had originally used did not express such affection.]

Prasaṅga 5

One day, Sūradāsajī, Kumbhanadāsajī, Rāmadāsa, and several other *Bhagavadīya* Vaiśnavas all gathered together and went to visit Paramānandadāsa at his house. When Paramānandadāsa saw all of those *Bhagavadīyas* coming towards his house, he felt very happy and fortunate to receive such visitors. In his heart Paramānandadāsa rejoiced, saying, "All of these *Bhagavadīyas* have shown me great favour in coming to see me today and Shrī Govardhananāthajī has, at the same time, also favoured me since *Bhagavadīyas* are themselves the *svarūpas* of Shrī Govardhananāthajī."

[*Bhāvaprakāsha*

Paramānandadāsa said that each of the *Bhagavadīyas* coming to

¹ See Part I above.

² See Part I above.

his house was a *svarūpa* of Shrī Govardhananāthajī because he knew that Shrī Thākurajī is seated in the heart of every *Bhagavadīya*. Paramānandadāsa felt that all of his desires had been fulfilled when the *Bhagavadīyas* favoured him with their visit. Then he had to make some offering to the *Bhagavadīyas*; what kind of offering could he make?]

Paramānandadāsa seated the *Bhagavadīyas* in high places of honour and then sang them a *pada*. Then Paramānandadāsa told the *Bhagavadīyas* that they must ask him to do something for them so that he might repay them for the honour they had shown him in coming to visit him. Then Rāmadāsajī asked, "Paramānandadāsa! All of the *Brajbhaktas*—King Nandajī, the *gopīs*, the cowherds, and the *sakhās*—express love for Shrī Kṛṣṇa, but which of these *Brajbhaktas* expresses the best love?"

[*Bhāvaprakāsha*

Rāmadāsajī knew that Paramānandadāsa, who was a *Bhagavadīya* who had received favour, concentrated his attention on the divine *bālalilā* and on descriptions of the *līlā* of Shrī Kṛṣṇa's infancy in the house of King Nanda; on the other hand, Rāmadāsajī also knew that Shrī Ācāryaji emphasized the deep sincerity of the love of the *gopīs*. Rāmadāsajī wanted Paramānandadāsa to say which love was better; that of the *gopīs* or that shown to Shrī Kṛṣṇa as an infant and as a child. By the love of the *gopīs*, Rāmadāsajī meant the erotic love expressed by the *gopīs* for Kṛṣṇa the youth.]

In reply to Rāmadāsa's question, Paramānandadāsa sang two *padas* in praise of the love of the *gopīs* for Shrī Kṛṣṇa. When the Vaiṣṇavas had heard Paramānandadāsa's *padas*, they all cried out, "Paramānandadāsa! You have been divinely blessed!" In this way, the delighted Vaiṣṇavas praised Paramānandadāsa and then went back to their own houses. Paramānandadāsa performed the *sevā* of singing *kīrtanas* before Shrī Govardhananāthajī for a very long time.

Prasaṅga 6

One day, Paramānandadāsa went to Gokula in order to have *darshana* of Shrī Gusāṇijī and of Shrī Navanītapriyajī. Paramānandadāsa stayed at Gokula all that day and decided to stay there overnight. At dawn on the next day, Shrī Gusāṇijī bathed and entered the temple of Shrī Navanītapriyajī. After a time, he summoned Paramānandadāsa and, when Paramānandadāsa had arrived, he said to him: "All of the *Brajlīlā* is very dear to Shrī Thākurajī; but, if you should want to recite all of this eternal *līlā* to Shrī Thākurajī, you would find your desire impossible

to attain because there is no end to that *līlā*. Since not a single one of the *līlās* that make up that wonderful *līlā* has an end, how could anyone ever sing of the entire *līlā* completely? However, I have composed one *kīrtana* which contains the experience of all of the *līlā* of Braj. I intend to give this *kīrtana* to you; you must always sing it at the proper time."

When Paramānandadāsa heard these words of Shri Gusānjī, he said, "Mahārāja! Please have mercy on me and tell me this *pada*."

Then Shri Gusānjī sang his *pada* to Paramānandadāsa. Since Shri Gusānjī was the guide to the *Puṣtimārga*, his *kīrtana* was in Sanskrit rather than in a vernacular language. After Paramānandadāsa had heard Shri Gusānjī's *pada*, which was a song of praise of Braj and all of the *līlā* performed there, he repeated it in Sanskrit until he had learned it by heart. Then, he composed several *padas* in Braj Bhāṣā based on Shri Gusānjī's *pada*. After Shri Gusānjī had taught his *pada* to Paramānandadāsa, he began the performance of the *māngalā darshana sevā*. Later, Paramānandadāsa returned to Govardhana Hill. There, he introduced Shri Gusānjī's Sanskrit *pada* as an invocation to be recited at the beginning of the *māngalā darshana*, the first *darshana* of the day, in Shri Nāthajī's temple. The singing of that *pada* at that time became a firm tradition in the temples of Shri Govardhanadhara. Paramānandadāsa was a *Bhagavadiya* who had received special favour.

Prasaṅga 7

On the morning of the festival of Janmāṣṭamī,¹ one year, Shri Gusānjī began making preparations for the holiday in the two temples belonging to him in Braj. First, Shri Gusānjī had the *svarūpa* of Shri Navanītapriyajī bathed with *pañcāmrta*² and then had the *svarūpa* dressed. Next, after seeing to arrangements for the midnight celebration of the divine birth, he set out for Govardhana Hill. There, he had Shri Govardhanānāthajī dressed and saw that the cradle was prepared for Shri Nāthajī. After the *rājabhoga darshana*, Shri Gusānjī, taking Paramānandadāsa with him, returned to Gokula. There, while Paramānandadāsa sang *padas* of joyous praise, Shri Gusānjī had Shri Navanītapriyajī anointed with oil and then dressed in special festival clothing and, finally, he himself applied the *tilaka*³ to Shri Navanītapriyajī's forehead.

When midnight came, Shri Gusānjī had the birth of Shri Kṛṣṇa enacted. Shri Navanītapriyajī was placed in his cradle and Vaiṣṇavas acted the roles of King Nandajī, Yashodājī, the *gopīs*, and the cowherds; all the while Paramānandadāsa sang *padas* celebrating the birth of Shri Kṛṣṇa.

¹ See note 3 on p. 154 above.

² See note 2 on p. 223 below.

³ See note 5 on p. 127 above.

[*Bhāvaprakāsha*

The following phrase appears in one of the *padas* that Paramānandadāsa sang on this festive occasion : “There will be ten who will bring happiness to everyone....” The words of a *Bhagavadīya* are never false : ten *svarūpas* of the divine were manifested—the seven sons of Shri Gusānjī, Shri Gusānjī, Shri Ācāryajī, and Shri Govardhanānāthajī—for the delight of everyone. By “everyone” Paramānandadāsa meant all the *daivī jīvas* who followed the *Puṣṭimārga*.]

Then all of the Vaiṣṇavas, including those playing King Nandajī, the *gopīs* and the cowherds, all began throwing yoghurt and turmeric on each other. Paramānandadāsa was completely transported with bliss and began to dance while singing *padas*. Paramānandadāsa was so totally absorbed in love that even the order of the *rāgas*¹ slipped out of his mind and, though it was night, he sang a *pada* in a daytime *rāga*. Then Paramānandadāsa swooned from the love that filled his being and fell to earth. Immediately, Shri Gusānjī lifted Paramānandadāsa up with his lotus-like hands and had water sprinkled over him while he himself recited a *mantra* from the *Veda* to revive him. Slowly the poet who had been overwhelmed with passion began to come to his senses. That is how Paramānandadāsa experienced all *līlās* that night and sang beautiful *padas*. Shri Gusānjī showed great favour to Paramānandadāsa.

That same night, after Shri Gusānjī had put his own son Giridharajī next to Shri Navanītapriyajī and then thrown the auspicious yoghurt and turmeric on him, he took Paramānandadāsa, who was still deeply absorbed in the ecstasy brought on by the throwing of yoghurt and turmeric, with him to Govardhana Hill to have *darshana* of Shri Govardhanānāthajī.

When Shri Gusānjī came out of the temple after arranging the *rājabhoga* food offering for Shri Nāthajī, he noticed Paramānandadāsa’s *alaukika* state of mind and said, “Just as Kumbhanadāsa was enraptured by *kishorālīlā*,² so has Paramānandadāsa been captivated by *bālalīlā*.” Then, Paramānandadāsa prostrated himself before Shri Gusānjī and

¹*Rāgas* are musical modes for both vocal and instrumental music (all of the *padas* composed by the *aṣṭachāpa* poets are in one of the *rāgas*); the *rāgas* are arranged into male and female and primary and secondary groups. Each *rāga* is to be sung or played at a particular time of the day or night.

²The *kishorālīlā* is the *līlā* performed by Shri Kṛṣṇa as a youth in Braj. The erotic play of Kṛṣṇa with Rādhā and the *gopīs* is included with the *kishorālīlā*. Kṛṣṇa’s *Brajlīlā* is divided into three periods : *bālalīlā*, the *līlās* performed by Kṛṣṇa from his birth until he reached the age of five; *paugandalīlā*, the *līlās* performed by Kṛṣṇa from age five to age seven or eight; *kishorālīlā*, the *līlās* performed by Kṛṣṇa from age seven or eight up to his departure from King Nanda’s tribe of cowherds to go to Mathurā. See: SHUKLA, *Kavivara Paramānandadāsa*. . . . , pp. 195–196.

went down the hill to the bottom, where he turned and prostrated himself to the banner of Shri Govardhananāthaji.¹ When he arose, he went straight to his cottage at Surabhīkuṇḍa without speaking a single word to anyone; he was deeply engrossed in the *rasa* of the celebration of Shri Kṛṣṇa's birth in Nanda's house. It was at this time that Paramānandadāsa decided to abandon his earthly body. He lay down to sleep at Surabhīkunda.

Meanwhile, during the interval between the *rājabhoga darshana* and the *utthāpana darshana* at Shri Govardhananāthaji's temple, Shri Gusāñijī asked his *sevakas*, "I did not see Paramānandadāsa today at the *rājabhoga darshana*; where has he gone?"

In reply, a Vaiṣṇava said, "Mahārāja, today, Paramānandadāsa seemed very restless and would talk to no one; now he is asleep down at Surabhīkuṇḍa."

When Shri Gusāñijī had heard this, he took that Vaiṣṇava with him and went to Surabhīkuṇḍa. Shri Gusāñijī saw Paramānandadāsa sleeping there and went over to him and laid his holy hand on his brow, saying: "I am aware of your intention, Paramānandadāsa; today it has been very difficult to have *darshana* of you." When Paramānandadāsa heard the words of Shri Gusāñijī, he awakened and threw himself on the ground before Shri Gusāñijī. Then he composed a *pada* of supplication to Shri Gusāñijī.

[*Bhāvaprakāsha*

Harirāyajī describes the *pada* that Paramānandadāsa sang as beginning with an entreaty to Shri Gusāñijī to show his favour to those who love him and then continuing with a series of praises of Shri Gusāñijī as the giver of refuge, of knowledge of the *Veda* and of the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*, and of the divine *līlā* of Braj.]

At that time, the Vaiṣṇava who had come to Paramānandadāsa with Shri Gusāñijī asked, "Paramānandadāsa, please tell me what I must do in order that Shri Thākurajī might be pleased with me and show his favour to me; I will do whatever you tell me to do."

When Paramānandadāsa heard this question, he was delighted with the Vaiṣṇava and said in reply, "Listen attentively to what I am going to say; I am going to give you a simple and easy course of action. If you listen carefully to what I say, you will be able to attain the goal that you desire." After Paramānandadāsa had in this manner prepared the Vaiṣṇava, he sang the following *pada* to him in which he answered his question :

¹Vaiṣṇava temples that are in use fly a banner.

Immediately upon awakening in the morning, sing in praise of Shri Vallabha, the son of Shri Lakṣmaṇa,¹ who bestows the gift of *bhakti*;

And praise Shri Viṭṭhalanātha who has the radiant form of Shri Vallabha Mahāprabhu, and also Shri Giridhara who shines with splendour;

Sing out in praise of Shri Govinda who is called “the Cloud of Bliss” and of Shri Bālakṛṣṇa who embodies the wonderful play of Kṛṣṇa the child;

And of Shri Gokulanāthajī who has explained the *Puṣṭimārga*, and of Shri Raghunātha who puts the god of love to shame;

And of Shri Yadunātha who is permeated with Bhagavān, and of Shri Ghanashyāma² who is filled with learning;

Praise Viṭṭhalanātha who is master of the Veda, Paramānandadāsa says that the Sun in his chariot is worn out from watching this endless *līlā*.

When Shri Gusāñjī and the other Vaiṣṇavas who had gathered around Paramānandadāsa heard this *pada*, their hearts were filled with pleasure. Then Shri Gusāñjī asked Paramānandadāsa what he was thinking about at that moment and Paramānandadāsa answered by singing a *pada* about the *līlā* of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa in union. As soon as he had sung this *pada*, he abandoned his earthly body and entered the divine *līlā*.

Shri Gusāñjī bathed and had the *utthāpana darshana sevā* performed in Shri Govardhananāthajī’s temple; after the *utthāpana darshana* had been completed, Shri Gusāñjī had the other *darshana* periods persented until the *shayana darshana* was finished and the temple was closed for the night. Shri Gusāñjī left the temple and went down to Gopālapura at the foot of the hill and sat in the place of honour reserved for him there. Meanwhile, all of the Vaiṣṇavas had cremated Paramānandadāsa’s corpse and were just entering Gopālapura when Shri Gusāñjī arrived. The Vaiṣṇavas gathered around Shri Gusāñjī and glorified Paramānandadāsa. Then Shri Gusāñjī praised Paramānandadāsa before all of the Vaiṣṇavas in these words : “Two oceans appeared in this *Puṣṭimārga*, one was Sūradāsa and the other was Paramānandadāsa. The hearts of those two are where the jewels of the *līlā* of Bhagavān are piled up in unfathomable *rasa*. ”

¹Shri Lakṣmaṇa is Lakṣmaṇa Bhaṭṭa, Vallabhācārya’s father. See pp. 23–26 in Part I above and: SHĀSTRĪ, II, pp. 6–13.

²Giridhara, Govinda, Bālakṛṣṇa, Gokulanātha, Raghunātha, Yadunātha, and Ghanashyāma were the seven sons of Shri Gusāñjī Viṭṭhalanātha. See pp. 42, 54–58 of Part I above and: PRABHU DAYĀLA MĪTALA, *Braj ke Dharma-Sampradāyon kā Itihāsa* (Delhi: National Publishing House, 1968), pp. 281–295.

Paramānandadāsajī was a *Bhagavadiya* who had received the blessing of Shrī Ācāryajī and with whom Shrī Govardhananāthajī was always pleased. There is no limit to the extent of Paramānandadāsa's *vārtā*; his *vārtā* can never be fully told.

The *Vārtā* of Kumbhanadāsa

[The *vārtā* of Kumbhanadāsa¹ opens with a *bhāvaprakāsha* in which Harirāyajī explains the *ādhidaivika* identity and the *ādhibhautika* birth of Kumbhanadāsa.]

NOW THE *bhāva* of the *vārtā* of Kumbhanadāsa will be described. Kumbhanadāsa, who was a Goravā Kṣatriya living at Jamunāvatā was a *sevaka* of Shri Ācāryajī Mahāprabhu and a member of the *Aṣṭachāpa* school of poets.

In the daytime *līlā*, Kumbhanadāsajī is the close *sakhā* of Shri Thākurajī whose name is Arjuna while, in the nocturnal *līlā*, he is Visākhā —one of Shri Svāminījī's *sakhīs*. Besides having the form of Kumbhanadāsa, Visākhājī also has the form of Kṛṣṇadāsa Meghana;² just as Kumbhanadāsa never allowed himself to be separated from Shri Govardhananāthajī, so did Kṛṣṇadāsa Meghana always stay by Shri Ācāryajī's side through all of Shri Ācāryajī's travels around India. Kumbhanadāsa, then, has, in *līlā*, the *sakhā*-form called Arjuna and the *sakhī*-form called Visākhā. There are eight gates into Girirāja; one of these eight gates³ is near Anyora and Kumbhanadāsa is the master of the *sevā* at that gate.

Kumbhanadāsa was a native of the village of Jamunāvatā.⁴ At the time of Shri Kṛṣṇa's divine *līlā* on earth in Braj, the sacred Yamunā River had two different channels. One of these channels was the present-day bed of the Yamunā River which runs by Cīraghāṭa and Gokula;

¹HARIRĀYAJĪ *Caurāśī Vaiṣṇavan kī Vārtā* [*Tin Janma kī Līlā Bhāvanāvālī*], ed. DvāRAKĀ-DĀSA PARĪKHA (Mathurā : Dvārakādāsa Parikha, 1961), pp. 447–494.

²See p. 151 above.

³See pp. 134–135 above.

⁴Jamunāvatā (or, Jamunāvatau) is a small village near Parāsoli in the vicinity of Govardhana Hill. See : PRABHU DAYĀLA MĪTALA, *Braj kā Sānskr̥tika Itihāsa* (Delhi : Rājakamala Prakāshana, 1966), p. 110.

the other channel, which no longer exists for *laukika* people, left the main channel at Cīraghāṭa and went by Govardhana Hill to the Candrasarvara at Parāsoli then to the village of Jamunāvatā and, finally, rejoined the main channel to pass on to Āgrā. At that time, of course, Āgrā and many other cities, towns, and villages did not exist.

It was at the Candrasarvara, by the second channel of the Yamunā, that the wonderful *rāsa-lilā* and the other events narrated in the “Rāsapañcādhyāī”¹ of the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* took place. It was there at the Candrasarvara that Kṛṣṇa and Rādhā vanished from the other *gopīs*; it was there that the *gopīs*, miserable because Kṛṣṇa had abandoned them without satisfying their desire for union, asked all of the trees and vines where Kṛṣṇa had gone; it was at Candrasarvara that the distraught *gopīs* discovered the prints of the lotus-like feet of Shrī Kṛṣṇa and followed them up to Apsarākuṇḍa where they saw that Shrī Kṛṣṇa had paused to braid Rādhā’s hair and decorate it with flowers and vermillion powder. When the *gopīs* followed the divine footprints on that occasion, from Apsarākuṇḍa to Rudrakuṇḍa, they found Rādhā weeping inconsolably. It is from the weeping of Rādhā that the place came to be called “Rudrakuṇḍa”.² There, Rādhā tearfully explained to the *gopīs* that, becoming swollen with pride at being chosen by Shrī Kṛṣṇa, she had told Kṛṣṇa that she could no longer walk and would have to be carried; Kṛṣṇa had asked her to climb up onto his shoulders and, as she had been preparing to do so, he had suddenly vanished. Then all of the *Brajbhakta-gopīs* continued searching for Kṛṣṇa and singing sad songs of lament until they came to Jamunāvatā and the sandy shore of the Yamunā; there they all sat down and wept. As the *gopīs* sat there in sorrow, Kṛṣṇa suddenly reappeared and took all of the *gopīs* back to Candrasarvara at Parāsoli and there they all performed the mind-dazzling *rāsa-lilā*. After they had been exhausted from the *rāsa-lilā*, they all refreshed themselves by playing in the water of the Yamunā. That was the way that the *rāsa-lilā* described in the “Rāsapañcādhyāī” was performed in the vicinity of Govardhana Hill.

Many reminders of the *lilā* described in the “Rāsapañcādhyāī” can be seen at the thick, dark forest called Shyāmaḍhāka³ near Jatīpurā (Gopālapura). The *rāsa-lilā*, according to some, was also performed between Kālidaha Ghāṭa⁴ and Baṇśīvāṭa⁵ at Brndābana; however, though there may be two places where *rāsa-lilā* was performed, the primary place was at Parāsoli by Govardhana Hill. A *rāsa-lilā* in the

¹See note number 2 on p. 134 above.

²In Sanskrit the word “*rudra*” means “crying” or “howling”. A *kundā* is a spring or small pool of water. See: MONIER MONIER-WILLIAMS, *A Sanskrit-English Dictionary* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1960), pp. 289–883.

³MĪTĀLA, p. 113.

⁴Ibid., p. 133.

⁵Ibid., p. 134.

spring also took place at Keshī Ghāṭa¹ below Bañśīvaṭa. Between Nandagāṇva² and Barasānā³ there is a place called Saṅketa;⁴ the second channel of the Yamunā flowed by Saṅketa towards Jamunāvātā. People today lack firm belief in these holy matters; if they would see the sacred places described above and listen to tales about them, then their belief would be strengthened and they would be moved spiritually.

[At this point begin the *prasaṅgas* of Kumbhanadāsa's *vārtā*.]

Prasaṅga 1

Kumbhanadāsa used to live at Jamunāvatā and farm his ancestral fields at Parāsolī on the edge of the Candrasarovara. From childhood, Kumbhanadāsa had led the upright life of a true Brajvāsī; he did not lie and he did nothing sinful. From his earliest childhood also, Kumbhanadāsa never felt attracted to the life of the family man. When Kumbhanadāsa grew up, he was married to an ordinary girl who had no connection with the divine *līlā*; nevertheless, since intimate association with a *Bhagavadiya* Vaiṣṇava like Kumbhanadāsa can never be in vain, Kumbhanadāsa's bride would eventually be worthy of deliverance (*uddhāra*). The marriage took place in the village of Jeta⁵ which is near Bahulābana⁶ in the neighbourhood of Mathurā. At this time, Śrī Govardhanānāthajī had not yet appeared on Govardhana Hill and Śrī Ācāryajī had not yet arrived to summon Kumbhanadāsa to Śrī Govardhanānāthajī to take refuge with him; consequently, Kumbhanadāsa had not yet become a famous *Bhagavadiya*.

Meanwhile, Śrī Ācāryajī, while he was at Jhārakhaṇḍa in South India in the course of his first pilgrimage around India, had had a dream in which Śrī Govardhanānāthajī had appeared and said: "I have appeared out of Govardhana Hill; reveal me there and establish *sevā* for me in the world." As soon as Śrī Ācāryajī had received this divine message, he suspended his tour and hurried north to Braj. With Śrī Ācāryajī were five of his *sevakas*: Dāmodaradāsa Harasānī, Kṛṣṇadāsa Meghana, Mādhava Bhaṭṭa, Rāmadāsa Sikandarapuravālā, and Nārāyanadāsa. When Śrī Ācāryajī and his *sevakas* reached Braj, they went straight to Govardhana Hill. At Govardhana Hill, they went to the village of Ānyora—which is right at the base of the hill—and called at the house of Sadū Pāṇḍe where Śrī Ācāryajī asked about the appearance of the divine *svarūpa* on Govardhana Hill. The events of the revelation

¹Ibid., p. 133.

²During his youth in Braj, Śrī Kṛṣṇa lived at Nandagāṇva. See: ibid., p. 122.

³Rādhā lived at Barasānā. See: ibid., pp. 118–119.

⁴Saṅketa, midway between Nandagāṇva and Barasānā, is the place where Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa used to meet secretly. See: ibid., p. 122.

⁵Ibid., p. 130.

⁶Ibid., pp. 102–103.

of that *svarūpa* as Shri Govardhananāthajī have been related in the *vārtā* of Sadū Pāṇḍe.¹ Sadū Pāṇḍe, his brother Māṇikacanda Pāṇḍe, his daughter Naro, and his daughter-in-law Bhavānī all became *sevakas* of Shri Ācāryajī. Shri Ācāryajī entrusted the conduct of the *sevā* of Shri Govardhananāthajī to another of his new *sevakas*, Rāmadāsa Cauhāna, who used to live in a cave over near Pūcharī.² A great number of *Brajvāsīs* became *sevakas* of Shri Ācāryajī and Shri Govardhananāthajī at that time.

Not far away, in Jamunāvatā, Kumbhanadāsa had got news that an outstanding person had come to Ānyora, that a divine *svarūpa* called Shri Thākura Govardhananāthajī had been revealed on Govardhana Hill, and that Sadū Pāṇḍe and many other *Brajvāsīs* had become *sevakas* of that outstanding person, who was called Shri Ācāryajī. When Kumbhanadāsa had heard this news, he said to his wife, "Let us go to Ānyora and become *sevakas* of Shri Ācāryajī, for with the favour of Shri Ācāryajī Shri Thākurajī will show his grace to us."

In reply, Kumbhanadāsa's wife said, "All right, I will go. I have no son; perhaps Shri Ācāryajī can use his spiritual power to help me get one."

When Kumbhanadāsa and his wife had come before Shri Ācāryajī and greeted him reverently, Shri Ācāryajī asked, "Kumbhanadāsa! Why have you come here?"

Kumbhanadāsa, who was a *daivī jīva* and so was able to perceive Shri Ācāryajī's extraordinary nature, answered, "Mahārāja, I have been living a spiritually empty life for many years, now please have mercy on me."

When Shri Ācāryajī had heard the words of Kumbhanadāsa, he said, "Both you and your wife must go and bathe and then return to me."

After Kumbhanadāsa and his wife had bathed in Saṅkarṣaṇakunda,³ they went back to Shri Ācāryajī and he initiated them with the divine name. As soon as she had received the initiation, Kumbhanadāsa's wife said to Shri Ācāryajī, "Mahārāja! You are great and mighty. I have no son; please take pity on me and grant me one."

When Shri Ācāryajī heard this, he was pleased and said, "Do not worry. You will have seven sons."

These words delighted Kumbhanadāsa's wife. But, Kumbhanadāsa said to her, "Why did you make that request of Shri Ācāryajī? If you had asked him for Shri Thākurajī, then he would have given you Shri Thākurajī."

But Kumbhanadāsa's wife answered, "I asked for what I desired;

¹HARIRĀYAJĪ, pp. 336–343; see also pp. 28–29 in Part I above.

²MĪTALA, p. 111.

³Ibid., p. 110.

you should ask for whatever you desire.” Kumbhanadāsa had no reply to his wife’s answer and could only keep silent.

After a short time, Shri Ācāryajī had a small shrine erected for Shri Govardhanadhara; when the shrine was ready, he had Shri Govardhanadhara installed within it and appointed Rāmadāsa Cauhāna to maintain the *sevā* at the shrine. Sadū Pāṇḍe and the other *Brajvāsīs* were to bring pure food—like milk, yoghurt, and butter—to Rāmadāsa to be offered to Shri Govardhanadhara and Rāmadāsa was to keep the *prasāda* for his own livelihood. On the occasion of the dedication of the shrine, Shri Ācāryajī gave the following instructions to Kumbhanadāsa and the other *Brajvāsī bhakta*s of Shri Govardhananāthaji: “Shri Govardhananāthaji is everything to us; therefore, you must always be devoted to his *sevā* and you must never take any of the *prasāda* until you have first had *darshana* of him.” In these words, Shri Ācāryajī commanded his *sevakas* to perform the *sevā* of Shri Govardhananāthaji carefully. Since Kumbhanadāsa had a beautiful voice and could compose excellent *kīrtanas*, Shri Ācāryajī assigned him the permanent duty of singing *kīrtanas* before Shri Govardhananāthaji.

One day, at dawn, Shri Ācāryajī awakened Shri Govardhananāthaji and then said to Kumbhanadāsa, “Sing something about the *līlā* of Bhagavān.” In obedience to Shri Ācārayaji’s wish, Kumbhanadāsa prostrated himself before Shri Govardhananāthaji and then sang a *pada* on the theme of Kṛṣṇa’s amorous *līlā*. When Kumbhanadāsa had finished the *pada*, Shri Ācāryajī asked him, “Kumbhanadāsa, how have you managed to experience the *rasa* of the *nikuñja līlā*?”

Kumbhanadāsa answered, “Mahārāja, it was by your favour.”

Then Shri Ācāryajī said to Kumbhanadāsa, “You have been divinely blest. Prabhu has given you the ability to experience the power of love; you will always be absorbed in Hari’s¹ *rasa*.”

That is why all of the *kīrtanas* composed by Kumbhanadāsa are on the subject of the love of Shri Kṛṣṇa and Shri Svāmīnījī.² Kumbhanadāsa sang neither about the celebrations at the birth of Kṛṣṇa, nor about the infancy of Kṛṣṇa, nor about his childhood *līlā*.

Thus did Shri Ācāryajī show his favour to Kumbhanadāsa and the other Vaiṣṇavas of Braj; then, in order to continue showing his grace for the people of the world, Shri Ācāryajī went back towards the south to Jhārakhaṇḍa to resume his tour around India.

Prasāṅga 2

Kumbhanadāsa used to come from Jamunāvatā to Govardhana Hill

¹“Hari” is one of the names of Shri Kṛṣṇa.

²For examples of Kumbhanadāsa’s *padas*, see : VRĀJABHŪṢĀṄA SHARMĀ (ed.), *Kumbhanadāsa* (Kāṅkaroli: Vidyā Vibhāga, 1963). RĀJESHA DĪKṢITA (ed.), *Kumbhanadāsa ke Pada* (Mathurā: Shri Ji Prakāshana Mandira, 1966).

every morning in order to have *darshana* of Shri Govardhananāthajī and to sing *kīrtanas* in front of that divine *svarūpa*. Shri Govardhananāthajī used to treat Kumbhanadāsa as an equal and the two often played together and discussed games.¹ But there came a period of several days in which a Muslim raider caused great upheaval as he came from the west looting and murdering in the villages of Braj. This raider established his camp only ten miles from Govardhana Hill. Kumbhanadāsa and three other Vaiṣṇavas—Sadū Pāṇḍe, Māṇikacanda Pāṇḍe, and Rāmadāsaji—were all very worried about the disaster caused by the arrival of the Muslim raider who was hostile to the *dharma* of Bhagavān. All four of these Vaiṣṇavas were close companions of Shri Nāthajī and all four of them were able to converse with him. The four Vaiṣṇavas entered Shri Nāthajī's shrine one day during the height of the peril created by the raider and asked Shri Nāthajī, "Mahārāja, what shall we do now? A Muslim raider who is an enemy of your *dharma* is pillaging the neighbourhood. Tell us what to do and we will do it."

Shri Govardhananāthajī answered, "Take me away to the thicket of Tonḍa,² I want to go there."

When the four Vaiṣṇavas asked Shri Nāthajī how they could carry him—for they had no vehicle, Shri Nāthajī told them to go get the male water buffalo that was at Sadū Pāṇḍe's house and he would ride on him. Sadū Pāṇḍe went and got the buffalo and the Vaiṣṇavas placed Shri Govardhananāthajī on his back.

[*Bhāvaprakāsha*

That buffalo was a *daivī jīva* who, in *līlā*, is the wife of a gardener at the house of Vṛṣabhānaji.³ This gardener's wife always used to bring flower garlands to Vṛṣabhānaji's house; her name is Vṛṇdā. One day when Shri Svāminījī came into the garden, Vṛṇdā, who was busy feeding her infant daughter, stood up but did not prostrate herself in greeting to Shri Svāminījī and did not apologize for this breach of etiquette. Shri Svāminījī, however, let it go and did not say anything. Later, Shri Svāminījī told Vṛṇdā to go to King Nanda's house and invite Shri Thākurajī to come to visit her. When Vṛṇdā heard what Shri Svāmanījī wanted her to do, she refused to go, saying that she still had to finish the flower garland on which she was working and, when the garland was finished, she would have to run an errand for Vṛṣabhānaji. When Shri Svāminījī received Vṛṇdā's refusal, she said to her: "When I entered the garden just now, you stood up and

¹Since Kumbhanadāsa was a *sakhā* in *līlā*, he could express his devotion to Shri Govardhananāthajī through *sakhyā bhāva* on earth. See pp. 88–89 in Part I above.

²MĀTĀLA, p. 115.

³Vṛṣabhāna was the father of Shri Svāminījī (Rādhā).

did not show proper respect to me. On top of that, now you have refused to do what I have told you to do. You are not fit to remain in this garden; you must fall to earthly existence and take birth as a male buffalo." Those were the words with which Shri Svāminījī cursed Vṛṇdā. Then Vṛṇdā fell at Shri Svāminījī's feet and began to beg and plead to be allowed to come back to Shri Svāminījī's garden. Shri Svāminījī told her that she would allow her to return only after she had carried Shri Thākurajī on her back through a forest; as soon as she had done that, she would lose her buffalo's body and become again a *sakhī* in the garden at Vṛṣabhānajī's house. The gardener's wife then became a male buffalo at Sadū Pāṇḍe's house.]

As soon as Shri Nāthajī was on the back of the buffalo, the group set out for the Tonḍa thicket. Rāmadāsajī walked along one side of the buffalo and held Shri Nāthajī while Sadū Pāṇḍe steadied him from the other side; Kumbhanadāsa and Māṇikacanda Pāṇḍe went in front leading the buffalo and clearing the path of brambles and brush. There were so many thorny bushes and briars along the way that the Vaiṣṇavas' clothing was soon in tatters and the Vaiṣṇavas themselves covered with painful cuts and scratches. Furthermore, the trail was rough and rocky. Finally, they reached the centre of the Tonḍa thicket, which was a bower with a brook running through it. It was towards this spot that Kumbhanadāsa and Māṇikacanda Pāṇḍe led the buffalo carrying Shri Nāthajī, always being careful to remove the thorny branches that might hurt Shri Nāthajī. In the middle of the bower that was at the centre of the Tonḍa thicket there was a small pond, a circular area free of vegetation, and a dais-like area of elevated ground. When Rāmadāsajī and Kumbhanadāsajī asked Shri Nāthajī where he would like to be seated, he instructed them to seat him on the dais-like area. Accordingly, the Vaiṣṇavas took the cushion that had served as Shri Nāthajī's saddle during the journey, placed it on the dais, and seated Shri Nāthajī on the cushion. After this had been done, Shri Nāthajī said to Rāmadāsa, "Make a food offering to me and then stand aside at a distance."

Rāmandāsajī and Kumbhanadāsajī thought to themselves, "Shri Nāthajī is going to perform *līlā* here in order to satisfy the desires of some *Brajbhaktas*."

When Rāmadāsajī offered only a small portion of the food supply to Shri Nāthajī, Shri Nāthajī commanded him to offer all of the food and not just a part of it. When Rāmadāsajī had done so, he said to Shri Nāthajī, "Now I have offered all of our food. If we are going to stay here, what are we going to do for food?"

To this Shri Govardhananāthajī replied, "We are not going to stay here; we have accomplished our purpose in coming here."

Then, as Rāmadāsajī, Kumbhanadāsa, Sadū Pāṇḍe, and Māṇikacanda Pāṇḍe all discreetly retired to the cover of a nearby tree, Shri Svāminījī stepped into the clearing within the bower (*nikuñja*) and selected what pleased her from the food offering. Then she took the food and walked over to Shri Govardhananāthajī and the two ate together. After she had eaten, Shri Svāminījī began to feel a little tired; therefore, Shri Govardhananāthajī said to Kumbhanadāsa, "Kumbhanadāsa! Sing some *kīrtanas* that will amuse Shri Svāminījī and make her forget her fatigue. I will eat while you sing."¹

Kumbhanadāsa thought to himself, "Prabhu feels like hearing something humourous." Kumbhanadāsa then sang a *pada* teasing Shri Nāthajī for asking the poor Vaiṣṇavas, hungry and full of thorn scratches, to entertain Shri Svāminījī and himself. Shri Govardhananāthajī and Shri Svāminījī were both delighted by Kumbhanadāsa's *pada*. The other Vaiṣṇavas felt very pleased when they heard it.

Later, Shri Svāminījī asked Shri Govardhanadhara how he had gotten to the bower and he replied that he had ridden on Sadū Pāṇḍe's buffalo. Shri Svāminījī then looked at the buffalo and said, "This is the wife of the caretaker of my garden; because of my curse, she has become a male buffalo. However, the noble *sevā* that she has done today in carrying you here has absolved her of her sin." After Shri Svāminījī and Shri Govardhananāthajī had played a variety of games in the thicket of Tonḍa, Shri Svāminījī went back to Barasānā.

[*Bhāvaprakāsha*

Since the Tonḍa thicket was so full of thorny plants, one may well wonder how Shri Svāminījī could enter it. She was able to enter because all of the vegetation of Braj is filled with the divine spirit. In obedience to the divine will (*icchā*), the trees and vines of Braj become beautiful, harmless, and loaded with flowers and fruits. In those places where *laukika* people find vicious thorns and stickers there may well be a bower (*nikuñja*) where Shri Thākurajī is performing his *līlā* with his *Brajbhaktas*. Such barriers of thorns are meant to keep out ordinary cowherds and those people who live according to the *maryādā mārga*² rather than according to the *bhakti*

¹The *padas* sung by the *Aṣṭachāpa* poets before Shri Govardhananāthajī—or before Shri Govardhananāthajī and Shri Svāminījī—are meant primarily for the delight of Shri Govardhananāthajī (and Shri Svāminījī) and secondarily for the delight and benefit of other Vaiṣṇavas. The *padas* were never meant to bring personal fame to the poets themselves.

²The "*maryādā mārga*" includes all of those doctrines that teach that man may bring about spiritual success for himself by means of his own efforts (which include strict observance of religious and social laws as well as more esoteric disciplines of thought and action). See also pp. 71–73 in Part I above.

mārga. There can be no doubt that the *bhaktas* of Braj are always very attentive to *sevā*. When the four Vaiṣṇavas were walking along with Shri Govardhananāthajī on the back of the buffalo, they encountered many people on the road. Those people, however, saw only four men and a buffalo; they were unable to see Shri Govardhananāthajī. Furthermore, if there had not been an impenetrable mass of thorns around the bower in the Tonda thicket, then local people would have entered that bower. The *rasa* of the *līlā* done by Shri Thākurajī is, however, not for everyone; it is only for the *Brajbhaktas*. *Rasa* is concealed for *laukika* people because of their fearfulness and because they do not consider the *bhāva* of divinity. What is to be worshipped in divinity? Since love replaces fear in *mādhura rasā*, there is no fear to be felt for divinity. By their outlook, people who enjoy *rasa* are able to feel bliss (*ānanda*). By means of an *alaukika* outlook, the *rasa* of *līlā* can be experienced.]

After Shri Svāminījī had left for Barasānā, Shri Govardhananāthajī summoned the four Bhagavadīyas.

[*Bhāvaprakāsha*

Since *Bhagavadīyas* are intimate friends of Shri Thākurajī, some may wonder why Shri Govardhananāthajī told the four *Bhagavadīyas*, when they were to witness the divine *līlā*, to withdraw to a point some distance away. When the *Bhagavadīyas*, in their *sakhī* forms, have *darshana* of *līlā*, they feel shy and bashful seeing Shri Svāminījī and Shri Thākurajī eating together and engaging in lighthearted play. So, when the two divine *svarūpas* are performing *līlā* in the bower (*nikuñja*) then all of the *sakhīs* discreetly retire into the shrubbery and watch the *līlā* through gaps in the screen of vegetation. So, when Shri Svāminījī had gone, Shri Govardhananāthajī called the *Bhagavadīyas* to come back and sit beside him.]

When the *Bhagavadīyas* had sat down, Shri Govardhananāthajī told Sadū Pāṇḍe find out whether or not the Muslim raider was still looting in the area. Sadū Pāṇḍe went out of the Tonda thicket and soon learned from people coming from the town of Govardhana that the raider and his army had left Braj. Sadū Pāṇḍe quickly returned to the bower and gave this welcome news to Shri Govardhananāthajī. Shri Govardhananāthajī, as soon as he had heard Sadū Pāṇḍe's report, had the Vaiṣṇavas put him

¹ *Mādhura rasa* is the experience of the bliss of union with Shri Kṛṣṇa that is felt by one who has cultivated perfectly *madhura bhāva* (*madhura bhāva* is described on pp. 89–90 of Part I above).

back on the buffalo and take him back to his temple on Girirāja. As the buffalo, after Shrī Govardhanadhara had been safely restored to his temple, was going back down the sacred hill towards Sadū Pāndē's house, he suddenly died and the gardener's wife was able to resume her place in *lilā*.

Later, all of the *Brajvāśis*, who had come in a spirit of thanksgiving to have *darshana* of Shrī Govardhanānāthajī, burst out shouting, "Deva-damana¹ is most auspicious; by his majesty the turmoil which had come upon us was dissipated in a moment!" Then Kumbhanadāsa pleased Shrī Nāthajī by singing several *padas* before him. In this way, the *padas* of Kumbhanadāsa became renowned in the world.

Prasāṅga 3

Kumbhanadāsa composed many *padas* and people everywhere began to sing them. A musician learned one of Kumbhanadāsa's *padas* and sang it before the Emperor Akbar in his palace at Fatehpur Sikri. When Akbar had heard this *pada*, he was deeply moved and exclaimed, "No one on earth has had such *darshana* of the Supreme Being as was enjoyed by the saint who composed this *pada*."

When the musician had heard Akbar's reaction to the *pada*, he said, "Sāhib! The saint who composed this *pada* lives very near here. His name is Kumbhanadāsa and he dwells in the village of Jamunāvatā over by Govardhana Hill."

When Akbar had got this information from the musician, he sent some of his men and several different kinds of vehicles to bring Kumbhanadāsa back to the royal palace so that he might meet with him. When Akbar's men reached Jamunāvatā, they found that Kumbhanadāsa was at his field by Candrasarovara near Parāsoli and not in Jamunāvatā. As soon as a villager could be found who would serve as a guide, Akbar's men set out for Kumbhanadāsa's field. When Akbar's men had finally found Kumbhanadāsa and told him that he was wanted at the imperial court, Kumbhanadāsa said, "I am a poor *Brajvāsi* and I am no one's servant. What does the emperor want with me? Why should I go to him?"

To this Akbar's men replied, "Bābā Sāhib! We know nothing but the emperor's order to us. He told us to bring you and be sent a horse-drawn buggy with us for you to ride in. So, please get into the buggy so that we may go. We came here at the command of the emperor; we must bring you back with us. If we should disobey the imperial order and return without you, then the emperor would have us executed. Please come with us to meet the emperor; when you have met with him then you can come back here."

¹"Devadamana" was the name by which Shrī Govardhanānāthajī was known before Shrī Ācāryajī revealed his true name. See pp. 22, 28 in Part I above.

At this Kumbhanadāsa thought to himself, "A terrible misfortune has befallen me, but I have no choice but to go. I will have to face whatever may come."

As Kumbhanadāsa was hesitating, Akbar's men again urged him to climb into the vehicle so that they could hurry back to the imperial court. Kumbhanadāsa, however, silenced them and said, "I have never ridden in a buggy and I am not going to do so now. I will put on a pair of shoes and go to Fatehpur Sikrī on foot." Although Akbar's men pleaded with Kumbhanadāsa to ride in the buggy, they could not persuade him and he walked all the way to Fatehpur Sikrī.

When the party reached Akbar's palace and the emperor was notified of Kumbhanadāsa's arrival, he invited Kumbhanadāsa to come to him at once and the poet complied. When Kumbhanadāsa came into the presence of the emperor, he was clad in a short shirt, a torn and dirty turban, a simple *dhotī*, and he was wearing a worn-out pair of shoes on his feet. Akbar greeted him and asked him to sit down. The pavilion in which the two men were seated glowed with inlaid jewels and pearls and was sweetly scented with perfume. Kumbhanadāsa, however, was very unhappy and said to himself, "I feel as though I were sitting in *Naraka*.¹ I much prefer the trees of Braj, among which Shri Govardhanadhara likes to play."

Then Akbar spoke to Kumbhanadāsa, "Bābā Sāhib, you have composed a great many verses about Viṣṇu; I would like to hear some of those *padas* straight from your mouth."

Upon hearing Akbar's request, Kumbhanadāsa became troubled and thought to himself, "I will not be able to avoid singing. Yet, I cannot sing *padas* about Shri Thākuraiji's *lilā* in front of a *mleccha*.² What shall I sing? Only Shri Govardhananāthaji deserves to hear my songs. By summoning me here, this *mleccha* has separated me from Shri Nāthaji; therefore, I will sing him a *pada* that will probably make him angry. But, even if he should become angry, he cannot harm me. As wise people say, 'One who has been accepted by Shri Kṛṣṇa is always safe and will never, even if the entire universe be against him, lose a single hair from his head'." With these thoughts in his mind, Kumbhanadāsa composed the following *pada* and sang it before Akbar:

A *bhakta* has no business coming to Sikrī;
I ruined my shoes in going there and I forgot Hari's name.

¹ *Naraka* is the lower third of the world in Hindu mythology; it is inhabited by demons. *Naraka* is also a place of suffering to which evil human souls fall. See: JOHN DOWSON, *A Classical Dictionary of Hindu Mythology* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1968), pp. 219-220.

² A *mleccha* is a non-Hindu; in the *Caurāsi Vaiṣṇavan ki Vārtā* the word *mleccha* is a synonym for "Muslim".

Now I must pay homage to one whose very face brings sorrow; Kumbhanadāsa says, without Lāla Giridhara¹ this whole palace is only a sham.

At first, when the emperor had heard this *pada*, his heart was filled with anger. But, after a moment of reflection, he said to himself, "If Kumbhanadāsa had been greedy, he would have tried to flatter me." Thus, Akbar realized that Kumbhanadāsa was devoted to his god above all else. Then Akbar said to Kumbhanadāsa, "Bābā Sāhib, I will carry out any order that you deign to give me."

Kumbhanadāsa replied, "From this day on, you must never call me here again." Upon hearing Kumbhanadāsa's words, Akbar dismissed him.

As Kumbhanadāsa was travelling along the road back to Jamunāvatā, he was deeply troubled by the sorrow of *viraha*. While in this mood, wondering when he would again be able to look upon the face of Shri Govardhananāthajī, he began to compose *padas* on the theme of *viraha*. When Kumbhanadāsa reached Govardhananāthajī's temple, he immediately went to have *darshana*. Although he had only been away from Shri Nāthajī for a few hours, Kumbhanadāsa felt that he had been away for at least two *yugas*;² but, as soon as Kumbhanadāsa looked upon the radiant face of Shri Nāthajī, he forgot every bit of his sadness. In his joy he sang many *padas*. When Shri Govardhananāthajī heard Kumbhanadāsa's joyful *padas*, he said, "Kumbhanadāsa! You are blest. You will never be separated from me even for a moment; I do not enjoy anything without you." Such was the mutual affection of Kumbhanadāsa and Shri Govardhananāthajī.

Prasāṅga 4

Rājā Mānasingha had great success and was able to invade many regions and conquer them.³ After he had first gone to Akbar to confer with him, Rājā Mānasingha decided that he would go to Mathurā to bathe in the holy Yamunā before returning into his own country. He was, furthermore, anxious to make up for the neglect in religious observances

¹"Lāla Giridhara" (Lāla who holds up the Mountain) is one of Shri Krṣṇa's titles. The authenticity of this poem and of the meeting of Kumbhanadāsa with Akbar is accepted by SARAYŪ PRASĀDA AGRAVĀLA in his study of Hindī poets at Akbar's court. See; SARAYŪ PRASĀDA AGRAVĀLA, *Akbari Darabāra ke Hindi Kavi* (Lucknow: Lucknow University, 1951), p. 35.

²The vast period of time that makes up one cosmic cycle (*kalpa*) is divided into four *yugas*.

³Rājā Mānasingha, the famous ruler of Āmer (Jaipur) during the reign of Akbar, was one of Akbar's best generals and closest-friends. His aunt was married to Akbar. See: JAMES TOD, *Rājasthāna kā Itihāsa* (*Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan*), trans. into Hindī by KESHAVA KUMĀRA THĀKURA (Allāhbādः Ādarsha Hindi Pustakālaya, 1965), pp. 634-635. PERCIVAL SPEAR, *A History of India* (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1968), p. 34.

that had been necessitated by his wars by visiting the leading shrines of Braj. First, Rājā Mānasingha bathed at the Vishrānta Ghāṭa in Mathurā and then he visited the temple of Shrī Kesorāyajī¹ in the same city. It was, at the time of Rājā Mānasingha's visit, *Jyaiṣṭha* (May-June), the hottest month of the year. Since the Caube Brāhmaṇas² knew that Rājā Mānasingha would be coming to have *darshana* of Shrī Kesorāyajī, they dressed Shrī Kesorāyajī in an impressive array of garments made of golden thread; his shawl, his *dhoti*, his turban, and the canopy over his head were all made of golden cloth.³ Besides all of this, Shrī Kesorāyajī was also given golden jewels to wear. When Rājā Mānasingha had had *darshana* of Shrī Kesorāyajī, he thought to himself, "They have put on all of this display just for my benefit." Then he gave an offering and left the temple. Next, Rājā Mānasingha went to Brīndābana where he knew there were many temples belonging to Shrī Kṛṣṇa. When the temple authorities and religious leaders of Brīndābana found out that Rājā Mānasingha would be coming to have *darshana* at temples of Shrī Kṛṣṇa in Brīndābana, they dressed the images of Shrī Kṛṣṇa in the costliest and most lavish clothes and jewels of gold that they possessed. Rājā Mānasingha had *darshana* in three or four of the largest temples in Brīndābana, left donations at each, and—feeling very hot and convinced that each temple had shown its most valuable jewels and garments in order to impress him—returned to his camp. After a short time, Rājā Mānasingha left Brīndābana and set out for Govardhana Hill. Late in the afternoon, Rājā Mānasingha reached Gopālapura and inquired when he might have *darshana* of Shrī Govardhananāthajī. He was told that the *uthāpana darshana* had just been completed and that the *bhoga darshana* was being readied. When the hour of the *bhoga darshana* was near, Rājā Mānasingha began to climb up Govardhana Hill. By the time the rājā, who had had to remove his shoes so as not to violate the purity of the sacred hill, had reached the temple of Shrī Nāthajī, he was sweating profusely in the heat; but when, after the temple gates had been opened for the *bhoga darshana*, he entered and saw Shrī Govardhananāthajī, he became at once cool. In those days, the *sevā* of Shrī Govardhananāthajī had been greatly embellished; since it was summer rosewater had been sprinkled here and there in the sanctuary and the breeze created by a large

¹The famous temple of Kesorāyaji (Keshava Deva) was destroyed in A.D. 1669 and a mosque, which still stands, was erected on its ruins. For information on the temple, see: F. S. GROWSE, *Mathurā: A District Memoir* (Allāhābād: N. W. Provinces and Oudh Government Press, 1883), pp. 126-131.

²See p. 111 above and: GROWSE, pp. 9-10.

³All of these precious and luxurious garments of golden cloth would have been very hot in the summer months; but, since the Caube Brāhmaṇas were not followers of the *Puṣṭimārga*, they were concerned only with giving an impression of great and lavish wealth and gave no thought to the comfort of the divine image Shrī Kesorāyajī.

fan was delightfully laden with incense and perfume. Shri Govardhananāthajī himself was dressed all in pearls: a necklace of pearls was around his handsome neck and earrings and other ornaments of pearl were tastefully placed on his body; on his head was a beautiful white turban.¹ Upon seeing the wonderful figure of Shri Govardhananāthajī, coolness spread through every pore of Rājā Mānasingha's body. Rājā Mānasingha realized that, at last, he had found the true *sevā* of Shri Kṛṣṇa and, with deep satisfaction, he whispered to himself, "Here Shri Kṛṣṇa has been perfectly enshrined. I knew from the words of the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* that Shri Kṛṣṇa became physically manifest on earth; now I have found Shri Govardhananāthaji, who is Shri Kṛṣṇa himself in manifestation. I am most fortunate indeed to have been able to witness such *darshana*."

Just as Rājā Mānasingha was whispering these words to himself, Kumbhanadāsa began singing *padas* before Shri Govardhananāthajī in which he described the splendour of Shri Govardhananāthajī which enraptures the heart of the beholder like the beauty of ten million Kāma-devas.² When Kumbhanadāsa had finished singing these *padas*, the signal for the end of the *bhoga darshana* period was given and Rājā Mānasingha prostrated himself before Shri Govardhananāthaji and then returned to his camp. Meanwhile, Kumbhanadāsa remained at the temple of Shri Nāthajī performing his *sevā* of singing *kīrtanas* filled with love and devotion until the last *darshana* period of the day had been completed; then he went back to his house in Jamunāvatā.

Later, in his own camp, Rājā Mānasingha began to tell his men about the glory of the *sevā* of Shri Govardhananāthaji. In the course of his account of the *sevā*, he described the Vaiṣṇava *padas* sung by the *kīrtana* singer in the temple and praised them again and again, saying that they went straight to the heart and were unlike any *padas* that he had ever heard before in his life. He finished his praise by asking his men if any of them knew the name of the man who had composed and sung those *kīrtanas*. In reply, one of Rājā Mānasingha's men, who was a *Brajvāsi*, said: "The poet about whom you are asking is a *Goravā* Kṣatriya named Kumbhanadāsa who makes his living by farming his land. Surely you have heard how the Emperor Akbar summoned this same Kumbhanadāsa to his court but could not persuade him to accept even one small gift. Kumbhanadāsa is an extraordinary man."

¹Since the followers of the *Puṣṭimārga* consider the divine *svarūpa* to be Shri Kṛṣṇa himself, they are always concerned about the comfort of the *svarūpa*. Thus, in the hot season, Shri Govardhananāthaji is dressed in pearls—which are considered “cool”—and in as little other clothing as possible. In addition, a fan must be supplied for further comfort.

²Kāmadeva, the Hindu god of love, is supposed to be wonderfully handsome. See note number 2 on p. 147 above.

When Rājā Mānasingha had heard the answer given by the *Brajvāsi*, he decided that he would have to meet with Kumbhanadāsa. Since it was night, he could not go to Kumbhanadāsa at that moment; however, he determined to go the first thing on the following morning. True to his decision, Rājā Mānasingha got up early in the morning and travelled around Govardhana Hill to the Candrasarovara at Parāsolī where Kumbhanadāsa had his field.

Before the rājā had reached Candrasarovara, Kumbhanadāsa had already bathed and sat down on the ground in his field. While he was sitting there, Shri Govardhananāthaji appeared. When Kumbhanadāsa caught sight of Shri Govardhananāthaji's radiant face, he called to the divine boy, "Bābā! Come over and sit in my lap."

Shri Govardhananāthaji immediately skipped over to Kumbhanadāsa and seated himself in his lap. As he climbed into Kumbhanadāsa's lap, Shri Govardhananāthaji said, "Kumbhanadāsa, I have come here to say something to you."

Just then, before Shri Govardhananāthaji was able to tell Kumbhanadāsa what it was that he had wanted to say, Rājā Mānasingha entered the field. When Shri Govardhananāthaji saw the rājā approaching, he became frightened and dashed behind a tree and stood there. Kumbhanadāsa kept his gaze fixed on the place where Shri Govardhananāthaji was standing hidden behind the tree and did even look towards the rājā when the rājā saluted him and sat down in front of him. At this point, one of Kumbhanadāsa's nieces appeared on the scene with a bowl of barley gruel which she had brought up from Jamunāvatā for Kumbhanadāsa's breakfast. This niece was well aware that the rājā had come to visit her uncle, for a *Brajvāsi* had told her that she must go to her uncle as soon as possible since a rājā had gone to visit him; the *Brajvāsi* had warned her that she must arrive in time to accept any present that the rājā might make, for Kumbhanadāsa himself would never even touch such a gift. When this niece saw Kumbhanadāsa ignoring Rājā Mānasingha and staring fixedly in the direction of a tree, she said, "Bābā, the rājā is sitting here patiently; you should attend to him."

In answer to his niece, Kumbhanadāsa said: "What is it to me if the rājā has sat down? The one to whom I wanted to talk has fled without telling me what he wanted to say to me. Now I don't know if he will speak to me or not."

When Shri Govardhananāthaji overheard Kumbhanadāsa's reply to his niece, he said—in a way that only Kumbhanadāsa could hear—"I am very pleased with you, so don't worry; I will talk with you." When Kumbhanadāsa heard what Shri Govardhananāthaji said, he was relieved from his anxiety. The rājā and Kumbhanadāsa's niece, however, knew nothing about Shri Govardhananāthaji's presence behind the tree.

Kumbhanadāsa then turned his attention to his niece and asked her to bring him his mat and his mirror so that he might apply his *tilaka*.¹ Kumbhanadāsa's niece, however, answered, "Bābā, the buffalo calf has eaten the mat and drunk the mirror."

To this Kumbhanadāsa said, "Well then, bring me a container of water."

Rājā Mānasingha was, at first, mystified by Kumbhanadāsa's niece's statement that the buffalo calf had eaten the mat and drunk the mirror; but, when he saw the girl pour water in a bowl and set it in front of Kumbhanadāsa and then spread grass on the ground for Kumbhanadāsa to sit upon, he realized that Kumbhanadāsa was so poor that he had to use grass for his mat and water in a bowl for his mirror. The rājā's theory was confirmed when Kumbhanadāsa looked at the reflection of his face in the bowl of water as he put his *tilaka* on his forehead. Rājā Mānasingha saw that everything that he had heard about Kumbhanadāsa's disregard for worldly possessions was absolutely true. At once, Rājā Mānasingha sent one of his retainers back to his camp to get his own golden, jewel-studded mirror. When the retainer had returned with the mirror, Rājā Mānasingha placed it before Kumbhanadāsa as a gift, saying, "Bābā Sāhib! Please look at your face in this mirror and use it when you apply your *tilaka*."

Kumbhanadāsa, however, refused the rājā's present with these words, "Brother, where would I keep a mirror like this? Since my house is thatched, a robber would easily be able to break in, kill me, and steal the mirror. I have no use for this mirror."

Upon hearing these words, Rājā Mānasingha thought to himself, "If he should accept this mirror, what, indeed, would he do with it? Where could he even find a buyer for it? He is right; he has no need for this mirror. Still, I can give him enough money for him to buy food for himself and his family for the rest of his life. That is what I will do." Then Rājā Mānasingha set a pouch containing a thousand *mohauras*² before Kumbhanadāsa.

But Kumbhanadāsa told Rājā Mānasingha, "I don't want this money either. I am a farmer and I am able to grow enough food for myself and my family."

Then Rājā Mānasingha said, "You live in Jamunāvatā; let me have that village given to you for your support."

To this offer, Kumbhanadāsa replied, "I am not a Brāhmaṇa so I

¹For a definition of the *tilaka*, see note number 5 on p. 127 above. For a discussion of the significance of the *tilaka* for modern followers of the teachings of Vallabhācārya, see: ĀNANDILĀLA SHĀSTRĪ, *Vaiṣṇavacinhānirūpana* (Nāthadvāra: Shri Vidyāvibhāga, 1952). pp. 1-15.

²A *mohaura* was a gold coin of great value.

don't have to accept your charity. If you want to give things away, then go find a Brāhmaṇa to receive your donations. I don't want anything from you."

But Rājā Mānasingha did not give up, and said to Kumbhanadāsa : "Summon your grocer and let me buy food from him for you."

To this, Kumbhanadāsa said, "My grocer is just like me."

When Rājā Mānasingha continued to ask Kumbhanadāsa to call his grocer so that he could buy food for him, Kumbhanadāsa said, while pointing to a *karila* tree and a *bera* tree, "In the hot season that *karila* tree is my grocer, for it gives me both flowers and fruit; and in the cold season that *bera* tree is my grocer and generously supplies me with fruit."

When Rājā Mānasingha considered how Kumbhanadāsa lived, he said to himself, "Kumbhanadāsa is indeed fortunate to have a tree for his grocer. I have seen many *tyāgis* and *vairāgis*, but never has there been on earth a *tyāgī* to equal Kumbhanadāsa, even though he is a householder."¹ With this thought in mind, Rājā Mānasingha paid homage to Kumbhanadāsa and said, "Bābā Sāhib! Give me an order."

Kumbhanadāsa said, "Will you promise to do whatever I tell you to do?"

Rājā Mānasingha answered, "I will consider myself highly blest to receive a command from you and I will carry out whatever command that you give me."

Then Kumbhanadāsa gave this order to Rājā Mānasingha : "You must never again come near me and you must never again speak to me."

Rājā Mānasingha prostrated himself before Kumbhanadāsa and said, "You have been divinely favoured. In the course of my travels over the world I have met great numbers of devotees of *Māyā*, but I have met only one true devotee of Shri Kṛṣṇa and that one true devotee is you. With these words, Rājā Mānasingha withdrew.

After Rājā Mānasingha had gone, Kumbhanadāsa's niece came to him and said, "There is nothing at all in our house; why didn't you accept the presents that the rājā offered?"

When Kumbhanadāsa heard this, he said, "Be quiet! If Shri Govardhananāthajī should hear you say such a thing, he will think that you are greedy and become very angry."

When Kumbhanadāsa's niece assured Kumbhanadāsa that she had only been joking and that she didn't really want anything, Kumbhanadāsa said to her, "Girl! Never joke about accepting favours from another person."

At just that moment, Shri Govardhananāthajī came out of hiding and again climbed up into Kumbhanadāsa's lap. When Shri Govardhana-

¹Kumbhanadāsa was, of course, married; see pp. 167-168 above.

nāthajī had settled himself in Kumbhanadāsa's lap, he asked him, "Kumbhanadāsa, why are you a little grouchy. What are you thinking about? Do you want to say something to me?"

In answer to these questions, Kumbhanadāsa sang a beautiful *pada* expressing his single-minded devotion to Shrī Govardhananāthajī. When Shrī Govardhananāthajī had heard Kumbhanadāsa's *pada*, he embraced Kumbhanadāsa and said, "Kumbhanadāsa! I have something to say to you."

"Please speak," said Kumbhanadāsa, "for you were going to say something when the rājā interrupted you. Ever since you ran away when the rājā appeared, I have been wondering what you were going to say. Please tell me what was on your mind."

Shrī Govardhananāthajī answered, "Today, the *sakhās* are having a contest to see which of them can prepare the finest food offering for me. Would you like to compete? That is what I wanted to say to you."

Then Kumbhanadāsa asked, "What would you especially like to eat today?"

Shrī Govardhananāthajī answered, "I would like milk and barley porridge, yoghurt, milk, *rotī*¹ made of various different flours, and cooked *karīla* fruits."

Kumbhanadāsa assured Shrī Govardhananāthajī that all of the foods that he desired were readily available and sent his niece to his house to get them. When the girl returned, she gave Kumbhanadāsa all of the required foods except the milk, which she said was still being boiled. Kumbhanadāsa told her not to have the milk boiled. While Kumbhanadāsa bathed, his niece went back to Jamunāvatā to get a jug of milk and some ground barley. After bathing, Kumbhanadāsa sprinkled salt on *rotīs* and placed them on a potsherd. When his niece arrived with the jug of milk and the ground barley, Kumbhanadāsa poured some water into the jug of milk and proceeded to prepare the barley porridge.

When the *sakhās* saw the food that Kumbhanadāsa was offering to Shrī Govardhananāthajī, they were very pleased and impressed. After the food had been offered to Shrī Govardhananāthajī, Kumbhanadāsa distributed some of it among the *sakhās* and ate the rest of it himself. When Kumbhanadāsa observed that Shrī Govardhananāthajī was eating the food that he had offered with relish, he was filled with bliss and began to sing *padas* in his joy. Kumbhanadāsa had experienced *līlā* when Shrī Govardhananāthajī talked with him and showed special favour to him; all that day Kumbhanadāsa remained drowned in *rasa*. In his delight he completely forgot himself and did not even remember

¹ *Rotī* is a flat, round kind of unleavened bread made from various flours.

until evening that he had not gone for *darshana* of Shri Govardhananāthajī in his temple all that day. When Kumbhanadāsa suddenly remembered that he had not had *darshana* yet that day, he jumped to his feet and ran from Parāsolī towards the temple of Shri Govardhananāthajī. By the time he reached the temple, his mind was filled with the anguish of *viraka* as well as with the fear that he would be too late for the last *darshana* period of the day. Just as Kumbhanadāsa got to the temple, the gates were being opened for the *shayana darshana*. Then Kumbhanadāsa was able to satisfy the desire of his eyes for *darshana* of Shri Govardhananāthajī. As he was enjoying the *darshana*, he sang many *kīrtanas* expressive of *rasa*. Kumbhanadāsa was indeed a *Bhagavadiya* who had received divine favour.

Prasāṅga 5

Once, some famous religious leaders from Brñdāvana came to Girirāja in order to meet with Kumbhanadāsa. They had heard that Kumbhanadāsa often had conversations with the physical manifestation of Shri Thākurajī and also that Kumbhanadāsajī had sung *padas* in praise of Shri Svāminijī. Since these religious leaders from Brñdāvana had also composed *padas* describing Shri Svāminijī, they were interested in meeting with Kumbhanadāsa to discuss with him his descriptions of Shri Svāminijī. With this intention in mind, Harivansha, Haridāsa, and other saintly men from Brñdāvana arranged to meet Kumbhanadāsa.¹ When they met him, they said: "Kumbhanadāsajī, you have composed many *kīrtanas* on the theme of Shri Svāminijī's play with Shri Thākurajī and we are very familiar with those *kīrtanas*; but, we have never heard any *kīrtana* composed by you on Shri Svāminijī alone. Please favour us with a *pada* about Shri Svāminijī."

When, in answer to this request, Kumbhanadāsa sang a *pada* about Shri Svāminijī, all of the men from Brñdāvana were very pleased and said, "Kumbhanadāsa, we have composed many *padas* about Shri Svāminijī in which we have compared her beauty with the splendour of the moon, but you have realized—when you sang in your *pada* that Shri Svāminijī's beauty surpasses that of hundreds of millions of moons—that her wondrous comeliness is unique and is beyond comparison with

¹Harivansha, born A.D. 1502 in Sahāranpur district, U.P. and died A.D. 1552 in Brñdāvana, was a famous Vaiṣṇava who founded the Rādhāvallabha *Sampradāya* at Brñdāvana. Harivansha is supposed to have arrived in Brñdāvana for the first time in A.D. 1533, which would be about two years after the death of Vallabhācārya. See : DHĪRENDRA VARMĀ (ed.), *Hindi Sāhitya Kosha* (2 vols.; Vārāṇasi: Jñānamandala Ltd., 1964), vol. II, pp. 645–647.

Haridāsa was a famous Vaiṣṇava musician and *bhakta* who lived as a *tyāgi*. He, who was himself considered an *avatāra* of the *sakhī* called Lalitā, emphasized the *sakhī bhāva* and founded a sect in Brñdāvana—which is called the *Sakhī Sampradāya* or the Haridāsi *Sampradāya*—based on the *sakhī bhāva*. Haridāsa was born near Brñdāvana about A.D. 1490 and died about A.D. 1575. See : VARMĀ, vol. II, pp. 637–638. GROWSE, pp. 217–222.

anything in this world."

When those saintly men had thus praised Kumbhanadāsa, they took leave of him and returned to Bṛndāvana. Kumbhanadāsa expressed his devotion to Shrī Thākurjī through *kishora bhāva*¹ and remained constantly drowned in the *rasa* of *līlā*. He was a *Bhagavadiya* who had received the highest blessing.

Prasāṅga 6

Once, Shrī Gusāñjī asked leave of Shrī Navanītāpriyajī to embark on a journey to Dvārakā in order to bring the possibility of spiritual deliverance (*uddhāra*) to the *daivī jīvas* whom he might encounter in the regions between Gokula and Dvārakā. But, before departing on his tour, Shrī Gusāñjī first went over to Shrī Govardhanānāthajī's temple to perform there the full round of *darshana sevā* from the *rājabhoga darshana* of the day of his arrival to the *rājabhoga darshana* of the following day. After the first *rājabhoga darshana* had been completed and the temple had been closed for the mid-day *anosara*,² Shrī Gusāñjī seated himself in his place of honour and all of the Vaiṣṇavas gathered at his feet in order to discuss with him various matters of interest in their community. In the course of the discussion, one of the Vaiṣṇavas brought up the problem of Kumbhanadāsa's poverty in the following words: "Mahārāja, there is terrible privation in the house of Kumbhanadāsa these days. Besides himself, Kumbhanadāsa must provide support for a very large family consisting of his wife, his niece, his seven sons, and each of his sons' wives. On top of supporting all of the people in his family, Kumbhanadāsa also shares his meager supplies with other Vaiṣṇavas. And his only sources of food are the crops that he grows on his farm at Parāsoli and the fruits that he gathers in season from *karīla* and *bera* trees."

Shrī Gusāñjī listened to the words of the Vaiṣṇava and remembered them well. Later, when Kumbhanadāsa came to have *darshana* of Shrī Gusāñjī, Shrī Gusāñjī told him that he had something important to say to him and asked him to sit down and wait for a moment. As soon as all of the Vaiṣṇavas had left, Shrī Gusāñjī turned to Kumbhanadāsa and said, "I am about to depart for Dvārakā in order to meet with some Vaiṣṇavas who have written me letters earnestly entreating me to come to spend some time with them. I absolutely must go and I want you to accompany me. The *Bhagavadiyas* will benefit greatly from association with you; you will soothe the pain of *viraha* that they feel and they will learn much from you. Furthermore, I have heard that you are suffering from a lack of money; by coming with me, your financial problems will

¹ *Kishora bhāva* is the *bhāva* of *kishora līlā*; see note number 2 on p. 161 above.

² See note number 3 on p. 151 above.

also be solved.¹ It is necessary that you come with me."

When Kumbhanadāsa had heard Shrī Gusāñjī's words, he said, "Mahārāja! I cannot oppose anything that you command. I will do whatever you tell me to do."

After talking with Kumbhanadāsa, Shrī Gusāñjī returned to the temple of Shrī Govardhananāthajī in order to reopen it and begin the performance of the *sevā* of the rest of the *darshanas* of the day. When the last *darshana* period of the day was over, Shrī Gusāñjī told Kumbhanadāsa to go to his house in Jamunāvatā, take leave of everyone there, and, early on the morning of the next day, return to Govardhana Hill prepared to leave for Dvārakā after the end of the *rājabhoga darshana*.

At dawn on the following day, Kumbhanadāsa presented himself before Shrī Gusāñjī at the temple of Shrī Govardhananāthajī. Then Shrī Gusāñjī bathed and awakened Shrī Govardhananāthajī at the first *darshana* period of the day. Shrī Gusāñjī continued to perform the *sevā* of dressing and feeding the sacred *svarūpa* at the various *darshana* periods until the end of the *rājabhoga darshana*. At the conclusion of that *darshana*, Shrī Gusāñjī took leave of Shrī Govardhananāthajī and went down from the temple on Girirāja. When Shrī Gusāñjī met Kumbhanadāsa, he told him that they would sleep that night at Apsarākunda² where their tents had already been pitched; therefore, Kumbhanadāsa and the other Vaiṣṇavas who were going on the journey all proceeded to Apsarākunda. When he reached Apsarākunda, Kumbhanadāsa began to suffer from *viraha* and said to himself, "Now what can I do? What can I say? No one knows of the pain I am suffering in *viraha* from the Lord of my life."

As Kumbhanadāsa's suffering was growing more and more intense, Shrī Gusāñjī woke up within his tent and so overheard all that Kumbhanadāsa said. Kumbhanadāsa remembered *darshana* of Shrī Nāthajī, his eyes filled with tears, and the hair all over his body stood on end. Filled with such powerful emotion that he could not sleep, Kumbhanadāsa went outside of the tent to a nearby tree and stood under the tree singing softly and mournfully of his misery. Shrī Gusāñjī, sitting within his tent, heard all of the sad *kīrtanas* of *viraha* that Kumbhanadāsa was singing. Finally, Shrī Gusāñjī could not bear to hear Kumbhanadāsa pining in his grief any longer and got up and went outside of his tent. There he saw Kumbhanadāsa with his eyes full of tears lost in the sorrow of his *viraha*; deeply moved by this sight, he said : "Kumbhanadāsa, go to the temple and have *darshana* of Shrī Govardhananāthajī. Your travels

¹It was customary for the Vaiṣṇava laymen to give donations to famous Vaiṣṇava poets in appreciation of their *padas*.

²Apsarākunda is situated about a mile to the southwest of the site of Shrī Govardhananāthajī's temple on Govardhana Hill. See : MĪTALA, p. 111.

to distant regions are over."

[*Bhāvaprakāsha*

Śrī Gусāñjī said to Kumbhanadāsa, when he saw how severely Kumbhanadāsa was suffering from *viraha* from Śrī Govardhanānāthajī, "Śrī Govardhanānāthajī is feeling just as bad in his temple as you are feeling here." Some may wonder how Śrī Gусāñjī could say that Śrī Govardhanānāthajī was suffering as much from the absence of Kumbhanadāsa as Kumbhanadāsa was suffering from separation from him. Śrī Gусāñjī knew that this was so because he was familiar with the case of Gajjanadhāvana.¹ Since Gajjana could not bear to be separated even for a moment from Śrī Navanītāpriyajī, he was overcome by grief when Śrī Akkājī² sent him out to buy *pān*³ at the *pān* shop. As he was going to get the *pān*, Gajjana was stricken with a fever which was brought on by the sorrow which he felt at being separated from Śrī Navanītāpriyajī. Gajjana suffered so terribly from *viraha* that he collapsed in a faint just as he entered the *pān* shop. Meanwhile, in the temple, Śrī Ācāryajī Mahāprabhu was offering food for the *rājabhoga darshana* to Śrī Navanītāpriyajī; then, all at once, Śrī Navanītāpriyajī said to Śrī Ācāryajī, "I will not eat anything until my friend Gajjana comes here." When Śrī Ācāryajī heard this, he immediately began inquiring where Gajjana was. When he was told that Śrī Akkājī had sent Gajjana to buy *pān*, he scolded her with these words: "Don't you know that Śrī Navanītāpriyajī cannot endure a moment without Gajjana? Why did you send Gajjana for *pān*?" Then Śrī Ācāryajī sent a *Brajvāsī* to get Gajjana and bring him back to the temple. When Gajjana appeared before Śrī Navanītāpriyajī, Śrī Navanītāpriyajī consented to eat. Without Gajjana, Śrī Navanītāpriyajī suffered from *viraha*. This is a doctrine of Śrī Ācāryajī's *mārga*: Just as the servant (*sevaka*) always thinks of his Lord (*svāmī*), so does the Lord always think of his *sevaka*.⁴ In the same vein, in the *Bhagavad Gītā* Bhagavān said to Arjuna:

Just as people take refuge with me, just so do I love them.⁵

¹HARIRĀYAJĪ, pp. 101–102.

²Vallabhācārya's wife, Mahālakṣmī, is called Śrī Akkājī ("Mother") in the literature of the Vallabhā Sampradāya. See PRABHU DAYĀLA MĪTALA, *Braj ke Dharma-Sampradāyon kā Itihāsa* (Delhi: National Publishing House, 1968), p. 218.

³See note number 1, p. 238, to the *vārtā* of Kṛṣṇadāsa below.

⁴It is one of the primary tenets of the *Puṣṭimārga* that Śrī Kṛṣṇa is as attached to the best of his *bhaktas* as they are to him.

⁵*Bhagavad Gītā*, IV: 11, see: S. RADHAKRISHNAN, *The Bhagavadgītā* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1960), p. 158.

Therefore, Shrī Gusāñjī said to Kumbhanadāsa, "Shrī Govardhananāthajī is feeling just as bad because of *viraha* in his temple as you are feeling for the same reason here." So, Shrī Gusāñjī went on to say, "Go to the temple and have *darshana* of Shrī Govardhananāthajī. Your travels to distant regions are over.]

When Kumbhanadāsa had received Shrī Gusāñjī's order to return to the temple, his body became cool and his heart was filled with delight. He prostrated himself before Shrī Gusāñjī and ran at top speed from Apsarākunda to Govardhana Hill; when he reached Shrī Govardhananāthajī's temple, the gates were just being opened for *darshana*. In his joy at having *darshana* of Shrī Nāthajī, Kumbhanadāsa sang a *kirtana* describing the pain caused by *viraha*. This *kirtana* greatly pleased Shrī Govardhananāthajī and caused him to say to Kumbhanadāsa : "I understand your feelings perfectly. You cannot live without me and I cannot live without you. From now on, you will always remain with me."

This filled Kumbhanadāsa with pleasure and moved him to prostrate himself before Shrī Govardhananāthajī and say, "Mahārāja! You have fulfilled my only desire in decreeing that I will never be separated from you."

Thus was Kumbhanadāsa a *Bhagavadiya* who had received divine favour.

Prasāṅga 7

Once, when Kumbhanadāsa, together with other Vaiṣṇavas, was seated with Shrī Gusāñjī, Shrī Gusāñjī smiled and asked him how many sons he had. Kumbhanadāsa answered, "Mahārāja, I have one-and-a-half sons."

To this, Shrī Gusāñjī replied, "What do you mean by saying that you have one-and-a-half sons? I have heard that you have seven sons."

Kumbhanadāsa answered, "Mahārāja, in a way, I have seven sons, but five of those sons are attached to the worldly life (*laukiकासक्त*) and so cannot truthfully be called my sons. The sixth son, Caturbhujadāsa,¹ is wholly mine, and the seventh son—Kṛṣṇadāsa, who performs the *sevā* of herding Shrī Govardhananāthajī's cows—is only half my son."²

|Bhāvaprakāsha

Some may wonder what Kumbhanadāsa meant by calling Kṛṣṇadāsa only half his son. After all, Kṛṣṇadāsa performed the *sevā* of caring for the cows belonging to Shrī Govardhananāthajī and that

¹Caturbhujadāsa was brought into the *Aśtachāpa* school by Shrī Gusāñjī. For the sectarian account of his life, see: NIRANJANADEVĀ SHARMĀ (ed.), *Dosau Bāvana Vaiṣṇavan kī Vārtā* (Mathurā : Shrī Govardhana Granthamāla Kāryālaya, 1966), pp. 17–24.

²This Kṛṣṇadāsa is different from the Kṛṣṇadāsa whose *vārtā* is given below.

is one of the best of all *sevās*; furthermore, many Vaiṣṇavas have reached Shri Ṭhākurajī through performance of the *sevā* of taking care of Shri Ṭhākurajī's cows. So why did Kumbhanadāsa say that Kṛṣṇadāsa was only half his son? Shri Ācāryajī manifested the *Puṣṭimārga*; the *Puṣṭimārga* is the *mārga* of the *bhāva* of the people of Braj. Thus, the *Bhagavadiyas* have sung, "The way of life characterized by *sevā* and love was manifested for the benefit of the people of Braj." The way of life of the *Brajbhaktas* was the performance of *sevā* in the presence of Shri Ṭhākurajī. By the performance of this *sevā*, the *Brajbhaktas* remained absorbed in the *rasa* of union (*samyoga*)¹ with the divine through the experience of the bliss of the divine form. But the *Brajbhaktas* also sang of the experience of the *viraha rasa*; therefore, those who are complete Vaiṣṇavas must experience both *samyoga rasa* (the *rasa* of union with the divine) and *viyoga rasa* (the *rasa* of separation from the divine).² He who does not experience both is only half a Vaiṣṇava. Kṛṣṇadāsa performed the *sevā* of caring for Shri Govardhananāthajī's cows and he had *darshana* of Shri Govardhananāthajī, but he did not experience the secret *līlā* of the *Brajbhaktas*.³ Therefore, he was only half a Vaiṣṇava and only half Kumbhanadāsa's son. Kumbhanadāsa said that Caturbhujadāsa was wholly his son because Caturbhujadāsa performed *sevā* formed of both the experience of *viyoga* (separation, *viraha*) and the experience of *samyoga* (union). Furthermore, Caturbhujadāsa sang *kirtanas* in which he demonstrated his familiarity with *līlā*.]

Shri Gusāñjī was delighted by the words of Kumbhanadāsa and said, "Kumbhanadāsa, you are right; only a *Bhagavadiya* could be your son. What is the use of many sons if they are not *Bhagavadiyas*?"

The *vārtā* of Caturbhujadāsa has been included with the *vārtās* of the two hundred and fifty-two *sevakas* of Shri Gusāñjī. The *vārtā* of Kṛṣṇadāsa is as follows:

Prasāṅga 8

Kṛṣṇadāsa used to serve as a cowherd in charge of Shri Govardhananāthajī's cows. He was given the duty of performing the *sevā* of caring for the cows by Shri Gusāñjī. It was his responsibility to sweep out the cowpens and to groom the cows and to take them out into the pastures to graze all day. In the evening each day, he had to corral all of the cows.

One day, while Kṛṣṇadāsa was driving the cows through the neighbour-

¹ See p. 91 in Part I above.

² *Ibid.*

³ The secret *līlā* is the *līlā* of Shri Kṛṣṇa and the *gopīs* which is described in the Rāsa-pañcādhyaī section of the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*. In this *līlā* there is both *samyoga* (union) and *viyoga* (separation).

hood of Pūcharī on the way from the pastures to the cowpens, a tiger suddenly lunged out of a cave in Govardhana Hill and rushed towards the cows in Kṛṣṇadāsa's care. All of the cows but one managed to outrun the tiger and reach the safety of the cowpens. The one cow which was unable to outrun the tiger was a very large, heavy cow with an ample udder that gave especially large quantities of milk; it was towards this cow that the tiger turned its attention. But, before the tiger could bring down the cow, Kṛṣṇadāsa ran forward and screamed to the tiger. "Fiend! This cow belongs to Shri Govardhananāthajī! If you are hungry, attack me!" Since it is a characteristic of tigers to assail anyone who defies them, the tiger turned away from the big cow and charged at Kṛṣṇadāsa. The cow entered the corral running and afraid, but Kṛṣṇadāsa was slain by the tiger.

Later, Gopinātha, who was a *Bhagavadiya* who had received much divine favour, and several other cowherds began to milk the cows in the cowpens. As Gopinātha was milking, he happened to look up and see Shri Govardhananāthajī milking the large cow with the ample udder. Beside the large cow Gopinātha saw Kumbhanadāsa and in front of the cow, holding her calf so that she would give more milk, was Kumbhanadāsa's son Kṛṣṇadāsa. The cow was quietly licking her calf. This was the *darshana* which was given to Gopinātha in the cowpen. After Shri Govardhananāthajī had finished milking the big cow, he returned to his temple where Shri Gusāṇijī was just preparing to offer him the food for the *shayana darshana*. Kumbhanadāsa also left the cowpens and headed for Shri Govardhananāthajī's temple; as Kumbhanadāsa was approaching the Daṇḍotī Crag, someone came up to him and told him that a tiger had killed his son Kṛṣṇadāsa. When Kumbhanadāsa had received this news, he forgot his own body and fell down unconscious. Although many *Brajvāsi* Vaiṣṇavas called out loudly to Kumbhanadāsa, Kumbhanadāsa did not revive and continued to lie where he had fallen. Finally, one of the Vaiṣṇavas went to Shri Gusāṇijī and said: "Mahārāja! Kumbhanadāsa's son Kṛṣṇadāsa the cowherd managed to save one of the cows from a tiger but was himself killed by the tiger. It all happened over by Pūcharī."

But at that point in the Vaiṣṇava's report, Shri Gusāṇijī broke in and said, "Don't talk that way, for that cow would never desert Kṛṣṇadāsa."

[*Bhāvaprakāsha*

Previously, in the divine *lilā*, the cow had promised to bring Kṛṣṇadāsa into the highest world (i.e., Goloka).¹ Kṛṣṇadāsa had saved that cow, which belonged to Shri Govardhananāthajī; therefore, that cow would never abandon Kṛṣṇadāsa.]

¹See p. 93 in Part I above.

When Shrī Gusāñjī asked where Kumbhanadāsa was, the Vaiṣṇava answered, “Mahārāja, Kumbhanadāsa was stricken with such overpowering grief when he learned of the death of his son that he fell down senseless near the Dāṇḍotī Crag on Govardhana Hill. Several people shouted his name in attempts to revive him, but he has given no sign of regaining consciousness.”

During the next *anosara* between *darshana* periods, Shrī Gusāñjī went down to Dāṇḍotī Crag where Kumbhanadāsa was lying unconscious. The Vaiṣṇavas standing there, when they saw Shrī Gusāñjī coming, said to him, “Mahārāja, Kumbhanadāsaji is an outstanding *Bhagavadiya*, but even he has suffered terrible shock at the loss of his son. No one can escape sorrow at such a time.”

When Shrī Gusāñjī had heard these words, he corrected the Vaiṣṇavas as follows: “Kumbhanadāsa is not griefstricken because of the death of his son; rather, he has been smitten with sorrow because the defilement (*sūtaka*) resulting from the death of his son will keep him from having *darshana* of Shrī Nāthajī for a long time.¹ That is what has made him fall down in a faint.”

As soon as Shrī Gusāñjī had given this explanation for Kumbhanadāsa’s fainting, he proved the truth of it by shouting to Kumbhanadāsa, “Kumbhanadāsa! come to the *darshana* of Shrī Nāthajī tomorrow morning and you will be allowed to have *darshana*.”

The moment Kumbhanadāsa had heard Shrī Gusāñjī’s words, he awakened and, after paying homage to Shrī Gusāñjī, said, “Mahārāja! Only you know my inmost soul.”

Then Shrī Gusāñjī answered, “Kumbhanadāsa, I know that you do not feel any sorrow that is related to *samsāra* and I know that if any Vaiṣṇava stay with you—even if only for a moment—then he will not be affected by any *laukika* sorrow. So how could any such sorrow ever affect you? Go and perform the funeral rites for the body of Kṛṣṇadāsa and, in the morning tomorrow, come to have *darshana* of Shrī Govardhananāthajī.” When Kumbhanadāsa had heard Shrī Gusāñjī’s words, he prostrated himself to him and went to conduct the proper ceremonies for his son’s body.

While Kumbhanadāsa was engaged with the funeral rites, Shrī Gusāñjī went to his place of honour and all of the Vaiṣṇavas joined him there. As soon as everyone was settled, the cowherd Gopināthadāsa came forward and said, “Mahārāja! Just after the tiger had killed Kṛṣṇadāsa over at Pūcharī, while I was busy milking a cow in the cowpen, I

¹According to Hindu belief, the parents* of a new-born child and the close relatives of a recently-deceased person are considered unclean and are barred from taking part in religious rites. The period of impurity lasts for several days. See : RĀJABALĪ PĀNDEYA, *Hindū Sanskāra* (Vārāṇasī : Chowkhamba Vidyabhawan, 1966), pp. 324–327.

saw Shri Govardhananāthajī milking the same cow that Kṛṣṇadāsa saved while Kṛṣṇadāsa himself held the cow's calf. All the while, the cow was licking her calf. That is the *darshana* that was given to me in the cowpen."

Then Shri Gusāñjī said to Gopināthadāsa, "What is so strange about that? Kṛṣṇadāsa is a *Bhagavadiya* and he defied the fierce tiger and saved Shri Govardhananāthajī's cow. Naturally, Shri Govardhananāthajī was very pleased with Kṛṣṇadāsa and took him into his eternal *līlā*. Since you are a *Bhagavadiya*, you received this *darshana*; such a *darshana* is very rarely experienced." All of the Vaiṣṇavas were very delighted when they heard this.

At daybreak, Kumbhanadāsa came to have *darshana* of Shri Govardhananāthajī. When he arrived, Shri Gusāñjī commanded the temple *sevakas* to let him have *darshana* before *darshana* was given to the rest of the people. Thus, Shri Gusāñjī showed his grace (*anugraha*) to Kumbhanadāsa and allowed him to have *darshana* before anyone else.

[*Bhāvaprakāsha*

It used to be customary to bar from the temples of Bhagavān anyone suffering from the defilement brought on by the death of a close relative. But, ever since the day that special *darshana* was given to Kumbhanadāsajī while he was defiled by the death of his son, special *darshana* has been given for those polluted by death. Thus, it was by the grace of Kumbhanadāsa that those who have been defiled by death have been allowed to have *darshana*. Shri Gusāñjī ruled that those Vaiṣṇavas who have hearts that are filled with love for the divine, but who have been temporarily polluted by death, may be admitted to *darshana* before the *darshana* given to those who are not polluted. Therefore, a special *darshana* may be given for those defiled by death before the *darshana* period attended by the undefiled. In this way, both Shri Govardhananāthajī and the Vaiṣṇavas who are devoted to him are satisfied and need never be separated from each other.]

After Kumbhanadāsa had had *darshana*, he went over to Parāsoli¹ and—because in his defiled state he could not perform his *sevā* of singing *kirtanas* before Shri Govardhananāthajī—began to sing *padas* of *viraha*. Kumbhanadāsajī spent all the rest of the period of his pollution singing *padas* of *viraha*; finally, when he had become free of his defilement, he resumed his *sevā* of singing before Shri Govardhananāthajī. Kumbhanadāsajī's love for Shri Govardhananāthajī was very great indeed.

¹Parāsoli was the appropriate place for Kumbhanadāsa to suffer his period of separation from the *sevā* of Shri Govardhananāthajī because it was at the Candrasarovara at Parāsoli that Shri Kṛṣṇa vanished from the *gopis* (see p. 166 above). Shri Gusāñjī also spent his six months of separation from Shri Govardhananāthajī at Parāsoli (see Kṛṣṇadāsa's *vārtā*, *Prasaṅga* 7, below).

Prasanga 9

One day, Gokulanātha and Bālakṛṣṇa¹ together came to Shrī Gusāñjī and said, "Kumbhanadāsajī has never come to Gokula; he ought to go there to have *darshana* of Shrī Navanītapriyajī."

When Shrī Gusāñjī had heard the words of his sons, he said, "Since Kumbhanadāsajī is completely absorbed in Shrī Govardhananāthajī's secret *lilā*, he and Shrī Govardhananāthajī are absolutely inseparable."

In reply to this, Gokulanātha said, "Let us try to take Kumbhanadāsajī to Gokula; if he will not come, then we can be sure that it is Bhagavān's will that he never go to Gokula."

Shrī Gusāñjī answered, "Go ahead and make plans, but Kumbhanadāsajī will never cross the Yamunā."

After a few days, Shrī Gusāñjī left Gokulanātha and Bālakṛṣṇa at Govardhana Hill and returned to Gokula. Then, on the eleventh day of the bright half of the month of Vaishākha,² Gokulanātha said to Bālakṛṣṇa, "Shrī Gusāñjī has gone to Gokula, so both of us ought to go there too. Let's take Kumbhanadāsajī with us to Gokula."

Bālakṛṣṇa answered, "But how can we take him there? He will not ride in any kind of vehicle and he will not leave the *darshanas* of Shrī Govardhananāthajī in the daytime to go anywhere."

"The nights are moonlit at this time of month," answered Gokulanātha, "and so we can go Gokula on foot. Now let us see if something wonderful may not happen; besides, if, by this scheme, we can be in the company of a great *Bhagavadiya* like Kumbhanadāsa, we will certainly profit spiritually."

Later, after the two brothers had had Shrī Nāthaji put to sleep for the night after the conclusion of the *shayana darshana* period, they went outside of the temple and there seized the hands of Kumbhanadāsa and began relating accounts of the *bhāva* of the divine *lilā* of Bhagavān Shrī Kṛṣṇa. As Kumbhanadāsajī listened, he became completely caught up in the *rasa* of *lilā* and totally forgot where he was. Gokulanātha, seeing that Kumbhanadāsajī was engrossed in contemplation of the *lilā* of Bhagavān, kept on talking about Bhagavān while, at the same time, leading Kumbhanadāsajī by the hand down the sacred hill towards the village of Ānyora and the road to Gokula. Bālakṛṣṇa and three or four other Vaiṣṇavas walked in silence beside Kumbhanadāsajī and Gokulanāthajī listening to the talk of divine *lilā*. While engaged in this discussion walking along the road, Gokulanātha asked Kumbhanadāsajī if Shrī Govardhanadhara

¹Gokulanātha and Bālakṛṣṇa were two of the sons of Shrī Gusāñjī; see p. 55 in Part I above.

²Vaishākha is the Hindu month corresponding to April-May. Vallabhācārya was born on the eleventh day of the dark half of the month of Vaishākha. For the significance of the eleventh day of the month, see note 1 on p. 144 above.

ever performed the *shringāra* of Shrī Svāminiji.¹ In reply, Kumbhanadāsa, who was still so drowned in love (*prema*) that he did not realize that he was being taken along the road to Gokula, said, "Yes, yes, he does. One night in the month of *Āshvina* (September-October), while gathering fruit in the forest with Lalitā and some other *sakhīs*, Shrī Nāthajī and Shrī Svāminijī came upon a dais-like raised area perfect for the performance of *shringāra* in the midst of a clearing that was ideal for the dance of the *rāsa līlā*. Visākhājī² started to perform *shringāra* for Shrī Svāminijī, but Shrī Govardhananāthajī stopped her, saying, 'Tonight, I will do the *shringāra*.' Then Shrī Govardhananāthajī moved to stand behind Shrī Svāminijī in order to begin braiding her hair. Just then, the *sakhī* called Visākhājī remembered that Shrī Svāminijī and Shrī Nāthajī cannot live without facing each other constantly and, with this keen insight into the desire in the hearts of the divine pair, held up a mirror in front of Shrī Svāminijī. By means of the mirror, Shrī Govardhananāthajī and Shrī Svāminijī could behold each other face to face. Meanwhile, Shrī Thākurajī had taken Shrī Svāminijī's long black hair in his holy hands and had cleverly interwoven it with a strand of pearls; suddenly, when Shrī Thākurajī looked into the mirror and saw Shrī Svāminijī's face there in all of its moon-like splendour, he was filled with joy and let her hair slip from his hand. As the hair fell, all of the pearls that Shrī Thākurajī had set into it also fell and scattered all over the ground. At this, there was much laughter. When *shringāra* was done like this, the *sakhīs* felt that a moment filled a long space of time. Then, Shrī Thākurajī said to Visākhājī, 'Take hold of Shrī Svāminijī's hair so that I may again interlace it with this string of pearls.' When Visākhājī had taken hold of the braid of hair, Shrī Thākurajī decorated it with pearls; after he had finished with the braid, he wound a string of pearls along the part in Shrī Svāminijī's hair. Meanwhile, the *sakhīs* had been fashioning jewels out of flowers to give to Shrī Thākurajī for Shrī Svāminijī's *shringāra*. While adorning Shrī Svāminijī, Shrī Thākurajī enjoyed tingling exhilaration as he looked upon her radiant face. He finished the *shringāra* by tracing a line of kohl around her eyes, applying a *tilaka* to her forehead, and colouring the soles of her feet red. Then Shrī Svāminijī performed *shringāra* for Shrī Govardhanadhara. After the two of them had adorned and bedecked each other, they began the *rāsa līlā* and other kinds of *līlā* with the *sakhīs*."

As Kumbhanadāsa was describing the above scene from the divine *līlā*, Gokulanātha led him up to the bank of the Yamunā across from Gokula. It was just at dawn. When Shrī Gusānjī saw the group across

¹ *Shringāra* is the act of dressing and adorning someone. The word also refers to erotic passion and enjoyment. See: MONIER-WILLIAMS, p. 1087.

² Visākhājī is Kumbhanadāsa's *sakhī* form; see p. 165 above.

the river, he got into a boat and came across to meet Kumbhanadāsa, Gokulanātha, Bālakṛṣṇa, and the other Vaiṣṇavas. Kumbhanadāsa had been so drowned in the *rasa* of *līlā* that he had even forgotten his body, but—all at once—he became aware of his surroundings. He saw Śrī Gusāñjī and withdrew his hand from the grip of Gokulanātha. In great haste, he began to run back towards Govardhana Hill, saying, “Oh! who will sing *kīrtanas* for Śrī Govardhananāthajī? I have neglected my *sevā*.” When Kumbhanadāsa began running back towards Govardhana Hill, Gokulanātha, Bālakṛṣṇa, and the other Vaiṣṇavas set out after him to try to catch him. Their efforts were, however, fruitless and Kumbhanadāsa quickly outdistanced them. When they returned to Śrī Gusāñjī, Śrī Gusāñjī said, “It is useless for you to try to catch Kumbhanadāsa. Why have you brought him here? Didn’t I tell you that he would never cross the Yamunā?”

In reply to this, Gokulanātha said, “What does it matter that he did not go across the Yamunā? We received the *alaukika* benefit of a whole night spent experiencing the *bhāva* of the accounts of the deeds of Bhagavān in the company of a *Bhagavadīya*; even a single moment passed with such a *Bhagavadīya* would be of inestimable value.”

Śrī Gusāñjī answered, “All that you have said is certainly true, but you should not have run in pursuit of Kumbhanadāsa. Kumbhanadāsa always awakens Śrī Govardhananāthajī in the morning by singing *kīrtanas* to him and so he must be present every morning at the temple or else Śrī Govardhananāthajī will not get up. That is how completely Śrī Govardhananāthajī places himself in the power of his *bhakta*.¹ In the future, if you want to hear accounts of the divine deeds, go either to Jamunāvatā or to Parāsolī and ask Kumbhanadāsa; he will tell you all that you want to know.

Then Gokulanāthajī, Bālakṛṣṇajī, and the other Vaiṣṇavas all went on to Gokula. Meanwhile, as soon as his horse had been saddled, Śrī Gusāñjī set off at a gallop after Kumbhanadāsa. In a short time, Śrī Gusāñjī overtook Kumbhanadāsa—who was still running—and said to him: “Kumbhanadāsa, you have never seen this road before; so, in order that you may not lose your way, why don’t you trot along behind my horse?” Kumbhanadāsa agreed to this suggestion and began to run along behind Śrī Gusāñjī’s horse.

While Kumbhanadāsa and Śrī Gusāñjī were on their way to Girirāja,

¹ According to the teachings of the *Puṣṭimārga*, Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s love for his dearest *bhaktas* is so strong that he actually can be said to be in their power; furthermore, when one devotes himself to Śrī Kṛṣṇa through the *vātsalya bhāva* (see pp. 88, 89 above) favoured by Vallabhācārya, one feels the love felt by a parent for his helpless child and sees Śrī Kṛṣṇa as his child in his power. See: R. KALĀDHARA BHĀTTĀ, *Shrimad-Vallabhācārya ke Dārshana-Ācāra kī Paramparā* (Ahmadābād : Nāgaradāsa K. Bāmbhaṇiyā, 1965), pp. 96–98.

Rāmadāsa and the other *bhitariyās* were all coming up the sacred hill after their bath of purification before the first *darshana* period of the day. Just as the *bhitariyās* were almost to the temple of Shri Nāthajī, someone touched them and they had to go back and bathe again.¹ After they had bathed a second time, they were again polluted by someone's touch on the way to the temple. Altogether, Rāmadāsa and the other *bhitariyās* bathed four times and were touched four times; as a result, the beginning of the first *darshana* period of the day was delayed for two hours. Just as Rāmadāsa and the *bhitariyās* were returning towards the temple after their fifth bath of the morning, they met Shri Gusānjī as he was dismounting from his horse. When Shri Gusānjī saw them, he said, "Rāmadāsa! Why has there been such a delay in starting the first *darshana* period of the day? Why are you just now coming to the temple?"

In answer to Shri Gusānjī's question, Rāmadāsa humbly said, "Mahārāja, I don't understand what has been happening. Every time that we bathe and turn towards the temple, someone touches us and we have to go bathe again. This is the fifth time that we have bathed; the awakening of Shri Nāthaji has been delayed for two full hours."

When Shri Gusānjī heard this, he realized that Shri Govardhananāthajī had had the *bhitariyās* polluted by touch so that the preparations for the first *darshana* would be delayed until Kumbhanadāsa had arrived to sing the *kirtanas* by which he would awaken. Shri Gusānjī then had the conch blown and told Kumbhanadāsa to begin singing *padas* for the awakening of Shri Govardhananāthajī. As he sang, Kumbhanadāsa felt great happiness in his heart because he had regained his *sevā* of singing *kirtana*. Since that day was the holiday of Nr̄sinha Caturdashi, Shri Gusānjī spent the day arranging for the observance of that celebration.²

Thus, Kumbhanadāsa, who was continually absorbed in the *rasa* of the *lilā* of Shri Govardhananāthajī, was a *Bhagavadiya* who had received the full divine grace. Kumbhanadāsa never went to Gokula.

Prasāṅga 10

One day, while Kumbhanadāsa was sitting in his field over at Parāsoli, Shri Govardhananāthajī came there also and began to frolic in front of him. Kumbhanadāsa sat there and watched Shri Nāthajī play until the time for the *utthāpana darshana* period had almost come. At that time, Kumbhanadāsa got up and got ready to go to Govardhana Hill. When

¹Since the *bhitariyās* came into direct contact with the holy *svarūpa* they had to be absolutely free of *laukika* pollution before they could enter the temple.

²Nr̄sinha Caturdashi, a festival in honour of the Nr̄sinha *avatāra* of Viṣṇu, is celebrated on the fourteenth day of the light half of the month of Vaishākhā (April-May). It is one of the chief festivals celebrated by members of the Vallabha *Sampradāya*. See MITALA, Braj ke Dharma. . . ., p. 530. RĀMAPRATĀPA TRIPĀTHĪ, Hinduon ke Vrat, Parva, aur Tyauhāra (Allāhbād : Lokabhāratī Prakāshana, 1966), pp. 84-88.

Śrī Nāthajī asked Kumbhanadāsa where he was going, Kumbhanadāsa replied, "It is time for the *utthāpana darshana*, so I am going to Govardhana Hill for *darshana* of Śrī Govardhananāthajī."

When Śrī Govardhananāthajī heard this, he said, "Kumbhanadāsa! Why do you want to go all the way over to Govardhana Hill when I am right here playing in front of you?"

To Śrī Nāthajī's question, Kumbhanadāsa replied, "Mahārāja, it is true that you are playing here right now, but you always give *darshana* and show your grace over at your temple. If you should decide to leave this field, I could not in any way keep you from going; but, on the other hand, you cannot leave your temple because you were established in it by Śrī Ācāryaji Mahāprabhu. You allow everyone to have *darshana* in the temple. Besides, I like to have *darshana* in the temple. So, please go home and favour me by giving me *darshana* there. *Sevā* in the temple is the glory of *darshana*, so I must go to the temple."

Then, Śrī Nāthajī said, smiling, "Kumbhanadāsa, your *bhakti-bhāva* is truly *alaukika*; I would never even for a moment leave you."

Śrī Nāthajī and Kumbhanadāsa together left Parāsoli and reached Govindakuṇḍa, where they heard the sound of the conch announcing the opening of the *darshana* period. Śrī Govardhananāthajī went as far as Ānyora with Kumbhanadāsa before going directly to his temple. Kumbhanadāsa climbed up the hill from Ānyora to the temple and had *darshana* of Śrī Govardhananāthajī there. Kumbhanadāsa was a true *Bhagavadiya*.

Prasāṅga 11

One day, a gardener came to the edge of the Cāndrasarovara at Parāsoli with a large basket containing two *ser*¹ of mangoes. He took the mangoes out of the basket, laid them carefully on the ground, and began to wipe them clean with a piece of cloth. At just that moment, Kumbhanadāsa was coming down to the Cāndrasarovara for a drink of water after he had had *darshana* at the *rājabhoga* period at the temple on Girirāja. When Kumbhanadāsa noticed the gardener's mangoes, he thought how beautiful they were and how suitable they would be for Śrī Govardhananāthajī. With these thoughts in mind, he asked the gardener where he was planning to take the mangoes. The gardener answered that he was going to take them to Mathurā and sell them for at least ten rupees. Although Kumbhanadāsa was anxious to get the excellent mangoes for Śrī Govardhananāthajī, he didn't even have a *paisa*² and so had no hope of buying them. There was only one thing for him to do. He fixed his mind on Śrī Govardhananāthajī and said in his heart to Śrī Govardhan-

¹A *ser* is equal to about two pounds.

²A *paisa* is a coin of very small value.

nāthajī : "Mahārāja, these mangoes are of exquisite beauty. Since you are a connoisseur of the best things, please come and eat these mangoes." Then, Shri Nāthaji came at once and devoured all of the mangoes. Since the mangoes were still physically present, the gardener was not aware of what had happened. He put the mangoes—which were now *prasāda* since they had been enjoyed by Shri Govardhananāthajī—into his basket and went on to Mathurā.

That same evening, in Mathurā, a Rājpūt who had come into the city from the village of Māṇṭa¹ on business saw the mangoes and asked the gardener how much they cost. When the gardener said that he would not take less than ten rupees for all of the mangoes, the Rājpūt paid that price and took the fruit down to the bank of the Yamunā where his friend, a Sanodhiyā Brāhmaṇa, was waiting for him. The two decided to keep half of the mangoes to take home and eat half of them right there. After they had eaten several of the mangoes, the two men lay down and fell asleep. As they slept, both of them received *darshana* of Shri Govardhananāthajī since they had both eaten Shri Govardhananāthajī's *prasāda*. When they had awakened from their nap, the Rājpūt excitedly asked the Brāhmaṇa if he had had any dream. The Brāhmaṇa answered that he had had *darshana* of Shri Govardhananāthajī while he slept. Then, the Rājpūt asked the Brāhmaṇa where he might find Shri Govardhananāthajī, and the Brāhmaṇa told him that Shri Govardhananāthajī was established on a hill called Girirāja about fourteen miles from Mathurā. When the Rājpūt heard where Shri Govardhananāthajī could be found, he said to the Brāhmaṇa : "You are very foolish to go on leading an ordinary life when you have had *darshana* of Shri Govardhananāthajī. In my dream I experienced a *darshana* so wonderful that I cannot wait any longer, but must go tomorrow morning to the place where such *darshana* is given. If you will just guide me to the *darshana* of Shri Govardhananāthajī, you may have my share of the remaining mangoes and five rupees besides."

Early next morning, the Rājpūt gave the Brāhmaṇa his share of the mangoes and, as soon as the Brāhmaṇa had put the mangoes in his house in Mathurā, the two set out for Govardhana Hill. The two of them had *darshana* of Shri Govardhananāthajī as soon as they reached his temple. During the *darshana*, Shri Nāthaji stole that Rājpūt's heart and after the *darshana* period the Rājpūt gave the Brāhmaṇa his weapons, his superfluous clothing, and five rupees. He kept only ten rupees for himself. The Brāhmaṇa did not remain any longer on Govardhana Hill, but returned to his house in Mathurā as soon as he had received the presents given by the Rājpūt. The Rājpūt, clad only in a *dhotī*, stood by the Dāṇḍotī Crag waiting for Shri Gusāñjī to come by. Finally, when the Rājpūt saw Shri

¹MĪTALA, Braj kā Sāṅskṛtika Itihāsa, p. 129.

Gusāñjī coming down the hill, he ran out and threw himself at his feet, saying, "Mahārāja! I have been waiting for a long time; please accept me and let me stay close to your feet."

When Shri Gusāñjī heard the Rājpūt's words, he said, "Kumbhanadāsa has had mercy on you; that is why you feel like you do. You are very lucky."

Then Shri Gusāñjī initiated the Rājpūt. After the Rājpūt had received the divine name, he tried to give his ten rupees to Shri Gusāñjī; Shri Gusāñjī, however, said, "You had better keep what money you have left since you have given all of your belongings to that Brāhmaṇa."

In reply, the Rājpūt said, "Now I have taken refuge with you, Mahārāja, so what appeal can money have for me? I will do whatever you tell me to do." After the Rājpūt had said this, he asked Shri Gusāñjī to tell him who he was in his previous birth and what virtuous action he had done to merit *darshana* of Shri Gusāñjī. In answer to these two questions, Shri Gusāñjī said: "In your former life you were a cowherd in Braj and took care of the cows belonging to King Nandajī, Shri Kṛṣṇa's father. Whenever you went out to graze the cows, you took a weapon with you. One day, while you were in the pasture, you saw a snake and killed it. Because of the offense of killing the snake, you fell into many births in *samsāra*. Your present good fortune is the result of Kumbhanadāsa's favour. Kumbhanadāsa saw a gardener's mangoes and mentally dedicated them to Shri Govardhananāthajī. Later, you met that same gardener and bought all of the mangoes which—unbeknown to you—had become *prasāda* on account of Kumbhanadāsa's mental dedication. You then ate some of the mangoes and gave some of them to a Brāhmaṇa. Since you were formerly a cowherd working for King Nanda, you are a *daivijīva* and could be attracted to Shri Nāthajī when he gave you *darshana* of himself while you slept. The Brāhmaṇa, however, was not a *daivī jīva* and so was completely unaffected by the *darshana* which he also received. In *lilā* your name was Nenā. Now you must again take up your weapon and resume your duty as herdsman of cattle by watching over the cows belonging to Shri Nāthajī. You may take *prasāda* in the home of Shri Nāthajī. I will give you clothes and a weapon. Today, however, you must fast so that tomorrow I can have you dedicate yourself to Shri Govardhananāthajī.¹ Come in the morning to Shri Nāthajī's temple."

In the morning, at the period just after the *śrīgāra darshana*, the Rājpūt bathed and dedicated himself by the *Brahmasambandha*.*mantra*

¹The initiation was divided into two parts; the first part was the taking of the eight-syllabled *mantra* by which the initiate took refuge with Shri Kṛṣṇa and the second—which required a day's fasting as preparation—was the actual self-dedication ceremony of the *Brahmasambandha*. See pp. 19–20 of Part I above.

in the presence of Shrī Nāthajī. In this way, the Rājpūt was made pure. As soon as the Rājpūt had taken as *prasāda* the food from the offering to Shrī Nāthajī, Shrī Gusāñjī gave him a weapon and clothes from among the clothing offered to Shrī Nāthajī. Thus prepared, the Rājpūt mounted a horse and took the cows out to the pasture. The Rājpūt's mind was so firmly centred on Shrī Govardhananāthajī that, after a few days, Shrī Nāthajī began giving him *darshana* among the cows. That Rājpūt became a *Bhagavadiya* and received great divine favour.

[*Bhāvaprakāsha*

When Kumbhanadāsajī offered the mangoes as mental *sevā* (*mānasi sevā*),¹ Shrī Govardhananāthajī ate them. When the Rājpūt ate those *prasāda*-mangoes, the grace (*anugraha*) of Bhagavān came upon him. Thus, no matter where a *Bhagavadiya* may offer food, Shrī Thākurajī, out of his affection for his *bhakta*, will always accept it. What more need be said about *prasāda* than that it is *alaukika*?]

One day, the Rājpūt's two sons came to visit him. When he saw them, the Rājpūt said to them: "Sons! You are soldiers. One loses his life uselessly in war. Now Prabhu has had mercy on me. You must think of me as being dead. My house now belongs to you. You must go away at once without waiting here for me, for I will never return with you."

When the two sons heard the words of their father, they returned home and informed everyone that their father had renounced the world and given up all mundane concerns.

[*Bhāvaprakāsha*

This *prasanga* illustrates the doctrine that *prasāda* and *darshana* of *Bhagavadiyas* will have wonderful results if the recipient of the *prasāda* and *darshana* is a *daivī jīva*.]

Kumbhanadāsajī, who out of his natural kindness showed favour to the Rājpūt, was a great *Bhagavadiya*. Since Shrī Govardhananāthajī places himself in the power of *Bhagavadiyas*, the result of a *Bhagavadiya*'s favour will be *alaukika*. Kumbhanadāsajī's wife and his five wordly sons also eventually were accepted by Shrī Govardhananāthajī and received deliverance (*uddhāra*) as a result of their contact with Kumbhanadāsajī. Kumbhanadāsajī's niece, who was the daughter of his brother, was widowed soon after her marriage. She had absolutely no interest in or contact with the *laukika*.

¹Mental *sevā* is held to be the best *sevā* in the *Puṣṭimārga*.

[*Bhāvaprakāsha*

Kumbhanadāsajī's sister was actually a *daivī jīva* who, in *līlā*, was a *sakhī* of Visākhājī. (Visākhājī appeared on earth as Kumbhanadāsajī.) Her name in *līlā* is Sarovarī. On earth, she went to live in Kumbhanadāsajī's house when her own parents died; since she was a *sakhī* of Visākhājī in *līlā*, it is only natural that she should have gone to live with Kumbhanadāsajī. Shrī Govardhananāthajī gave her *darshana* and allowed her to have direct experience of his nature.]

Prasāṅga 12

One day, which happened to be the day before the anniversary of Shrī Gusānijī's birth, Shrī Govardhananāthajī thought to himself, "Shrī Gusānijī and all the Vaiṣṇavas have always celebrated my birthday and made it famous in the world; therefore, now I ought to make Shrī Gusānijī's birthday famous in the world."¹ With this thought in mind, while Rāmadāsajī was directing the *śrīgāra* and Kumbhanadāsajī was composing *kīrtanas* for the *śrīgāra darshana*—Shrī Gusānijī was not present since he had gone to Gokula for the day—Shrī Govardhananāthajī said to Rāmadāsajī, "Shrī Gusānijī always stages a great celebration for my birthday, so I want to honour him on his birthday tomorrow. You and all of the Vaiṣṇavas must gather and begin making preparations for the celebration of Shrī Gusānijī's birthday; you must, for example, bring me delicacies to eat which can then be given as *prasāda* as a part of the celebration."

When Rāmadāsajī had heard the command of Shrī Govardhananāthajī, he asked the divine *svarūpa* what specific foods should be prepared. Shrī Govardhananāthajī replied that sirup-filled *jalebi*¹ candies should be prepared for the occasion. Rāmadāsajī and Kumbhanadāsajī, who had also heard the instructions of Shrī Govardhananāthajī, promised that they would act at once to prepare for the birthday celebration. As soon as Rāmadāsajī had completed his *sevā*, he assembled all of the *sevakas* and told them that the next morning would mark the beginning of the celebration of Shrī Gusānijī's birthday and that Shrī Govardhananāthajī needed special food for the birthday festival. When Sadū Pāṇḍe heard this, he said that as much ghee and flour as would be needed could be taken from his house. Kumbhanadāsajī also wanted to make a contribution, but there was nothing in his house. Nevertheless, he went home and got his two male buffalo calves and his two female buffalo

¹Shrī Gusānijī's birthday, celebrated on the ninth day of the dark half of the month of Pauṣa (December-January), is one of the most important holidays observed by members of the Vallabha *Sampradāya*.

²Jalebis are a kind of candy made of dough shaped into pretzel-like forms and allowed to soak up hot syrup.

calves and sold them to a *Brajvāsi* for five rupees; he then gave the five rupees to Rāmadāsajī for the birthday celebration. Some of the *sevakas* gave two rupees and all of them gave at least one rupee.

Brown sugar was sent for and Sadū Pāṇḍe brought ghee and flour. All night until dawn the next day everyone was busy making *jalebīs*. When morning came, Rāmadāsa had Shri Govardhananāthajī anointed and dressed in the fine garments that Shri Gusāñjī had prepared with his own hands and sent over from Gokula. Then, after the food offering had been made to Shri Nāthajī, Shri Nāthajī himself told Kumbhanadāsajī to begin singing songs of praise of Shri Gusāñjī; when Kumbhanadāsa started singing such *padas*, Shri Govardhananāthajī became very happy.

Meanwhile, in Gokula, Shri Gusāñjī was anointing Shri Navanītāpriyajī and dressing him in preparation for the *rājabhoga darshana*. When that *darshana* had been completed, Shri Gusāñjī left Gokula and went to Govardhana Hill. When he got to Govardhana Hill, he bathed and went up the hill to the temple. As he entered the temple, he noticed that, though the food offering had already been made, there were many baskets of *jalebīs* in the temple. Naturally, his curiosity was aroused, so he asked Rāmadāsajī, "What is the reason for all of the merrymaking today? Why is there so much food here to be offered?"

In reply, Rāmadāsajī said, "Shri Govardhanadhara knew that today is your birthday and had this food prepared by all the *sevakas* for a birthday celebration."

Later, after the *bhoga darshana* period, Shri Gusāñjī seated himself in the place of honour reserved for him, called Rāmadāsajī, and asked, "Rāmadāsa, where did all of this great quantity of food come from? The *sevakas* are few in number and are not rich. How could they have acquired all of this food?"

In reply, Rāmadāsajī said, "Mahārāja, Sadū Pāṇḍe gave the ghee and flour, Kumbhanadāsajī contributed five rupees, and the other Vaiṣṇavas donated one or two rupees each until, all together, a total of twenty-one rupees had been collected. With this money sugar was purchased."

After a time, Kumbhanadāsajī came to Shri Gusāñjī and greeted him most humbly. Shri Gusāñjī, who was well aware of the severe poverty in Kumbhanadāsa's house, took the opportunity to ask Kumbhanadāsajī how he had been able to get five rupees to give for the birthday celebration.

Kumbhanadāsajī explained to Shri Gusāñjī where he had got the money in the following words, "Mahārāja, my home is nowhere but at your lotus-like feet and all that I have is yours. I sold for five rupees the four buffalo calves that were not necessary for the bare support of myself and my family. The *dharma* of a Vaiṣṇava requires that he sell

his own body, his life, his house, his wife, and his children for your sake. How could I, a lowly householder living ensnared in *samsāra*, ever hope to fulfill this Vaiṣṇava *dharma* without the favour that you have shown to me?"

Śrī Gusāñjī was delighted at the speech of Kumbhanadāsa and said to him, "One like you who has been favoured by Śrī Ācāryajī with such wonderful humility most certainly has Śrī Govardhananāthajī in his control." In this way Śrī Gusāñjī praised Kumbhanadāsajī, who was a *Bhagavadiya* worthy of divine grace.

Prasāṅga 13

Once, Kumbhanadāsajī asked Śrī Ācāryajī about the doctrines of the *Puṣṭimārga*. Śrī Ācāryajī responded by teaching Kumbhanadāsajī about the eighty-four kinds of sin, about the characteristics of *rājasī*, *tāmasī*, and *sātvikī bhaktas*,¹ about the *sevā* of the *darshana* periods from morning until night, and about the *bhāva* of *bālalilā* and *kishorālilā*.² Śrī Ācāryajī finished his instruction by saying, "That person upon whom Śrī Govardhananāthajī has shown favour will inquire about the doctrines of the *Puṣṭimārga* and then will act according to those doctrines; thus, *Bhagavadiyas* like you, Kumbhanadāsa, will ask and then will take action. But a very difficult time is coming in which no one will ask and no one will teach the doctrines." In this way, Śrī Ācāryajī instructed Kumbhanadāsajī.

[*Bhāvaprakāsha*

Just as the milk of a female lion cannot be contained by any vessel but one made of gold, so the *bhāva* of the divine *līlā* and the divine *dharma* cannot remain anywhere but in the heart of a *Bhagavadiya*.]

Prasāṅga 14

One day, Kumbhanadāsajī asked Śrī Gusāñjī the following question : "Mahārāja, my wife, five of my seven sons, and my seven daughters-in-law are all living in my house but are not attached to the *bhāva* of devotion to Bhagavān; however, the divine *bhāva* has become firmly rooted in my niece. Why is this so?"

When Śrī Gusāñjī had heard this question, he told all of the Vaiṣṇavas to listen and said to Kumbhanadāsajī, "Kumbhanadāsa! Listen carefully to what I am going to say. I am going to tell you a story from one of the *purāṇas*. Once there was a Brāhmaṇa who had a daughter who had reached marriageable age. In order to get a good husband for his daughter, that Brāhmaṇa had another Brāhmaṇa make a search

¹See note number 1, on p. 235, to the *vārtā* of Kṛṣṇadāsa below.

²See note number 2, on p. 161 above.

for a husband for the girl in the various good families of the region. The second Brāhmaṇa was empowered to go ahead and arrange for the marriage whenever he should find a suitable husband. After the second Brāhmaṇa had departed on the quest for a husband, the first Brāhmaṇa met, separately, three other Brāhmaṇas and, since he was very anxious to find a husband for his daughter, sent each of them off on the search for a husband. The Brāhmaṇa thus gave each of the four Brāhmaṇas the authority to arrange a marriage as soon as a good husband should be found; but, he did not tell any of the Brāhmaṇas that he had several Brāhmaṇas making the same search. As luck would have it, each of the four Brāhmaṇas went to a different village and each independently arranged a marriage, but the marriage arranged by each Brāhmaṇa was set for a day that happened to be the same in all four cases. Each Brāhmaṇa had a *tilaka* placed on the brow of the boy he had chosen to signify that that boy was to be married and then went back to the first Brāhmaṇa to tell him of the marriage. When the first Brāhmaṇa learned that each of the four Brāhmaṇas had arranged a marriage for his daughter, he was horrified and said : "Why did you do this? I only have one daughter, but the four of you have come back with four different boys to marry her. What can I do?"

When the four Brāhmaṇas heard this, they said : "We have carried out our part of the bargain and arranged for your daughter's marriage. If her marriage does not take place on the day that has been set, which is exactly one month from today, then we will see that you suffer. The wedding date has been set and the *tilaka* has been placed on the forehead of the youths chosen for your daughter. There is no possible way that the marriage can be cancelled."

The Brāhmaṇa answered, "There is a full month between today and the day of the marriage. Perhaps a solution to the problem will come up."

Then the four Brāhmaṇas reminded the girl's father that they would be back the day before the wedding in order to prepare for the marriage and returned to their own homes. After they had gone, the Brāhmaṇa began to worry. He had no idea at all of what he could do. No solution to the problem presented itself. Even suicide was out of the question, for that would be the ruin of his daughter. By the fourth day after the four Brāhmaṇas had left, the Brāhmaṇa was so tortured by anxiety that he could neither eat nor drink. It was in this state of mental agony that the Brāhmaṇa went down to the bank of a nearby river to perform his customary evening devotions. There on the edge of the river the Brāhmaṇa sat down and, suddenly overcome by all of his worries, began to weep bitterly. It happened that a *Bhagavadiya*, who was bathing a short distance away, heard the Brāhmaṇa's lamentation and was moved by it to ask the Brāhmaṇa what was troubling him. When the Brahmana had

told of his problem, the *bhakta* said: "I have no permanent dwelling place, but, for your sake, I will stay for a time here by this river. You must, however, not come to see me again until the day before the wedding. In the meantime, don't worry, Shri Thākurajī will help you. Now go home and eat and drink as if nothing were bothering you."

The Brāhmaṇa put his trust in the *bhakta* and went home to wait for the day before the wedding date. At dawn on the day before the wedding the Brāhmaṇa went back to the place where the *Bhagavadiya* was staying and asked him to explain his plan for the solution of the problem. The *bhakta*, however, told the Brāhmaṇa to go back home and return in the evening. When the Brāhmaṇa returned to the river in the evening, the *bhakta* instructed him to sit down and catch each animal that might come near him. The Brāhmaṇa sat down on the river bank and captured a cat, a dog, and a donkey as they wandered by him. When the Brāhmaṇa had shown these three animals to the *bhakta*, the *bhakta* told him to shut all three of them up together in one big room and then to put his daughter into the same room as soon as she had fallen asleep for the night. The Brāhmaṇa carried out the *Bhagavadiya's* instructions perfectly. When his daughter had fallen asleep, he put her on a cot in the room with the three animals, locked the door, and left. Meanwhile, the four boys and the four Brāhmaṇas all arrived. When morning came on the following day and the time came for the wedding to take place, the Brāhmaṇa went to the *bhakta* and told him that it was time for the marriage. The *bhakta* then told the Brāhmaṇa to unlock the door to the room where he had left his daughter with the animals and to give the four girls which he would find there to the four boys in marriage. The Brāhmaṇa then went to the room, unlocked the door, and found that instead of his own daughter, a cat, a dog, and a donkey, there were four girls in the room. Each of the four girls looked exactly like his own daughter and seemed to be the same age that she was. The four girls were given to the four boys with the proper wedding ceremonies and then were allowed to depart for their new homes. The Brāhmaṇa then gave presents to the four Brāhmaṇas and they also left. Then, the *bhakta* of Bhagavān said that he, too, would go. But, before he could go, the Brāhmaṇa fell at his feet and said, "You have saved my life; my house and all that I have are yours. Take whatever you want."

To this the *bhakta* replied, "I need nothing. It was Shri Thākurajī who performed the miracle that removed your sorrow."

Then the Brāhmaṇa asked, "The four girls seemed to be identical. How can I distinguish my daughter from the other girls? To which youth is my daughter married? How can I know my daughter so that I can invite her to return for a visit?"

The *bhakta* answered the Brāhmaṇa with the following words: "Ask each of your four sons-in-law about the characteristics of his wife. The wife with human characteristics will be your daughter."

Several days later, the Brāhmaṇa invited his four sons-in-law to come to his house. One at a time, he had each son-in-law seated for dinner. While the first son-in-law was eating, the Brāhmaṇa said to him, "Is my daughter behaving well? What kinds of habits does she have?"

The son-in-law answered, "She is virtuous, but, because of certain habits, no one likes her. For example, she barks like a dog, her tongue is always lolling out of her mouth, she has no manners, and she will eat anything at any time."

The Brāhmaṇa then called the second son-in-law and asked him the same questions.

The second son-in-law answered, "Although your daughter has many pleasant traits, she also has some that are like the characteristics of a cat. For example, she stealthily takes and eats the food that has been set aside for Shri Thākurajī, she is something of a glutton, and she goes from house to house looking for food."

Next, the Brāhmaṇa called the third son-in-law and asked him the same questions that he had asked the first two.

The third son-in-law answered, "Your daughter is very nice, but she brays like a donkey, she is always dirty, and she often kicks at others with two feet just as an ass kicks."

Finally, the Brāhmaṇa called the fourth son-in-law and asked him about his wife.

The fourth son-in-law answered, "What more need I say about your daughter than that she is a goddess like Lakṣmī herself. She speaks sweetly to everyone, she follows the rules of correct conduct, she has good manners, and she is devoted to me, to Vaiṣṇavas, to her guru, and to Shri Thākurajī."

When the Brāhmaṇa had heard this description, he knew that the fourth son-in-law's wife was his daughter. Consequently, he used to invite that son-in-law and his daughter to visit him.

So, Kumbhanadāsa, the traits of a Vaiṣṇava are found in human beings. What does the mere possession of a human body tell? Rāvaṇa and Kumbhakarāṇa were demons because their deeds were demonic. It is by one's actions that one may be judged to be human or a demon. Since your niece is a great *Bhagavadīya*, she will crave association with you and find such association profitable."

With this tale Shri Gusāñjī gave instruction to Kumbhanadāsa and the other Vaiṣṇavas. Kumbhanadāsajī was a *Bhagavadīya* who deserved the favour of Shri Ācāryajī.

Prasanga 15

As time passed, Kumbhanadāsa's body began to weaken. Finally, one day when Caturbhujadāsa asked Kumbhanadāsa, his father, if he should carry him from the Sankarṣaṇakuṇḍa—which is close to the village of Ānyora—back to Jamunāvatā, Kumbhanadāsa said, “I am going to abandon my earthly body in one or two hours, so I want to remain here.”

Later, at the *rājabhoga darshana* period, Shri Gusāñjī found out from Caturbhujadāsa that Kumbhanadāsa was at Sankarṣaṇakuṇḍa and decided to go to see him. When Shri Gusāñjī reached Sankarṣaṇakuṇḍa, he asked Kumbhanadāsa, “Kumbhanadāsa, upon which kind of *līlā* are you fixing your mind?”

Since Kumbhanadāsa was too weak to get up, he bowed his head and prostrated himself mentally before Shri Gusāñjī and sang several *kīrtanas* in praise of Shri Kṛṣṇa and his love for Rādhā. As soon as he had finished singing these *kīrtanas*, Kumbhanadāsa left his earthly body and merged into the divine *nikuṇja līlā*. After Kumbhanadāsa had thus passed on to the eternal *līlā*, Caturbhujadāsa and his other sons performed the funeral ceremonies for his corpse and carried it out to the gate near Ānyora.

Although he felt very sad and would not speak to any of the Vaiṣṇavas, Shri Gusāñjī conducted the *sevā* of Shri Govardhananāthaji through the rest of the day until the *svarūpa* was put to sleep for the night. Rāmadāsa was worried about Shri Gusāñjī's silence and said, “Mahārāja, why are you acting so strangely?”

In reply, Shri Gusāñjī said, “A great *Bhagavadiya* has departed. A wonderful *bhakta* has vanished from the earth.” In these words Shri Gusāñjī praised Kumbhanadāsa, who was an outstanding *Bhagavadiya* about whom enough can never be said. He was worthy of the favour of Shri Ācāryaji.

The *Vārtā* of Kṛṣṇadāsa

[The *vārtā* of Kṛṣṇadāsa¹ opens with a *bhāvaprakāsha* in which Harirāyajī explains the *ādhidaivika* identity and *ādhibhautika* birth of Kṛṣṇadāsa.]

NOW THE *bhāva* of the *vārtā* of Kṛṣṇadāsa the Adhikārī² will be described. Kṛṣṇadāsa was a *sevaka* of Śrī Ācāryajī Mahāprabhu and was one of the *Aṣṭachāpa*.

Kṛṣṇadāsa is a manifestation of Rśabhasakhā, an intimate companion of Śrī Thākurajī in *līlā*. Rśabha is a *sakhā* in the daytime *līlā* and in the nocturnal *līlā* he is an intimate *sakhī* named Śrī Lalitājī. Lalitā has four forms : in her first form she is an adolescent girl called Lalitā who may witness the *līlā* performed by Śrī Govardhananāthajī and Śrī Svāminijī in the grove (*nikuṇja*) ; in her second form Śrī Lalitājī is the *sakhā* Rśabha who may experience the *rasa* of the diurnal *līlā* by accompanying Śrī Govardhananāthajī to the cow-pastures ; in her third form she is Dāmodaradāsa Harasānī who always stayed with Śrī Ācāryajī and whom Śrī Ācāryajī called “Damalā”;³ in her fourth form Lalitājī is Kṛṣṇadāsa who remained with Śrī Govardhanadhara and performed the duties of an *adhikārī*.

¹HARIRĀYAJĪ, Caurāsi Vaiṣṇavan ki Vārtā [Tin Ja ḥma kī Līlā Bhāvanāvālī], ed. DVĀRAKĀDĀSA PARĪKHA (Mathurā : Dvārakādāsa Parīkha, 1961), pp. 494–538.

²An *adhikārī* is a person who holds a position of authority over other persons or over some institution. For example, a governor, a superintendent, or an administrator are all *adhikāris*. An *adhikārī* may also, however, be a person who has mastered some particular sphere of knowledge or some method of spiritual discipline. Kṛṣṇadāsa’s title of *Adhikārī* contains elements of both of the above meanings of the word : Kṛṣṇadāsa was certainly the superintendent in charge of the administration of the temple of Śrī Nāthaji and he was also, just as certainly, able to understand and practise the teachings of the *Puṣṭimārga*. See MONIER MONIER-WILLIAMS. A Sanskrit-English Dictionary (Oxford : Clarendon Press, 1960), p. 20. KARL H. POTTER, Presuppositions of India’s Philosophies (Englewood Cliffs : Prentice-Hall, 1963), pp. 37–38.

³HARIRĀYAJĪ, pp. 2–13.

Of the eight gates into Girirāja, the one which faces towards Barasānā, which is Rādhā's village,¹ is called Bilachū. Shrī Govardhanāñthajī sets out on the road that goes by this gate to perform the *rāsa* dance with the *gopīs*. Kṛṣṇadāsa is in charge of this gate.²

Kṛṣṇadāsa was born in the house of a Kunabi³ in the village of Cilotarā in Gujarāt. Kṛṣṇadāsa's father governed the village as its headman. When Kṛṣṇadāsa was born, his father summoned several Brāhmaṇas who had reputations for wisdom and learning from nearby villages and asked them to describe all of the qualities of the new-born son and to predict his lifespan. Kṛṣṇadāsa's father told the Brāhmaṇas that he would pay them according to the kind of predictions that they made about his son. All of the Brāhmaṇas told Kṛṣṇadāsa's father that, no matter what kind of payment he might make, the birth-signs of his new child showed clearly that that child would be a *bhakta* of Shrī Bhagavān and would not remain in his parental home. Kṛṣṇadāsa's father became very sad when he received this news. The Brāhmaṇas also said that the new son's name must be "Kṛṣṇadāsa". Kṛṣṇadāsa's father gave suitable gifts to the Brāhmaṇas and named his son Kṛṣṇadāsa.

From the age of five, Kṛṣṇadāsa felt a deep interest in the tales of the exploits of Bhagavān; if his mother and father should try to avoid telling him these sacred stories, then Kṛṣṇadāsa would cry and refuse to eat and drink. Kṛṣṇadāsa's parents, however, were afraid that, if they should tell their son the holy stories, he would immediately become attached to homeless ascetics and give up the world just as the Brāhmaṇas had predicted at his birth. They were convinced that if their son did not interest himself in the matters of the world, great misfortune would befall the entire family. Nevertheless, Kṛṣṇadāsa managed to hear the sacred tales. In this way, Kṛṣṇadāsa came to be twelve years old.

When Kṛṣṇadāsa was around twelve years old, a grain merchant came to Cilotarā and set up shop on the outskirts of the village. The merchant sold all of his grain in Cilotarā and made 14,000 rupees. Kṛṣṇadāsa's father knew the merchant had been doing well, so he allied himself with a thief who intended to rob the merchant. The thief stole all of the merchant's money one night; he kept 1,000 rupees for himself and gave 13,000 rupees to Kṛṣṇadāsa's father. Kṛṣṇadāsa knew about all of this and said to his father: "You have committed a crime in allowing the merchant to be robbed and in accepting part of the loot. You will

¹F. S. GROWSE, *Mathurā: A District Memoir* (Allāhābād: N.W. Provinces and Oudh Gov't Press, 1883), pp. 311–314. PRABHU DAYĀLA MĪTALA, *Braj kā Sānskr̥tika Itihāsa* (Delhi: Rājakamala Prakāshana, 1966), pp. 118–121.

²See pp. 134–135 above.

³The *Kunabi* caste is an agricultural caste of western India within the Shūdra *varṇa*.

find it to be to your advantage to return the money to the merchant."

When Kṛṣṇadāsa's father heard the words of his son, he hit him and said, "Don't say anything to anyone about this matter; I am the headman of this village and this is my privilege."

Kṛṣṇadāsa warned his father that he would be ruined through his evil action and said nothing more.

In the morning, the merchant, bemoaning his loss, appeared before Kṛṣṇadāsa's father and complained that he had been robbed by thieves. Kṛṣṇadāsa's father replied by berating the merchant for conducting his business outside of the village and finished by having his men evict the merchant from the settlement.¹ The merchant went away, lamenting his lost profits. Kṛṣṇadāsa felt pity for the merchant and, thinking that he might transform the evil done by his father into good by helping the merchant who was a stranger without friends in that region, he ran up to the merchant and said that he had something to tell him privately. The merchant stopped and listened as Kṛṣṇadāsa told him that his father had been behind the theft and had given the thief a thousand rupees and kept the rest for himself. Kṛṣṇadāsa advised the merchant to go to the capital (which was located at Campāner)² and make a formal complaint before the king.³ Kṛṣṇadāsa, furthermore, promised that he would himself testify on the merchant's behalf; he stipulated only that, in return for his help, the merchant must agree that the lives of his father and the thief would be spared. In this way Kṛṣṇadāsa planned to help the merchant recover his money.

The merchant proceeded on to the capital and made his complaint before the king. The merchant also told the king that the son of the village headman who had arranged the theft would serve as his witness and that the stolen money should be restored without causing any loss of life.

The king was greatly impressed when he heard about the boy who had exposed the crime committed by his own father and decided that he would ask the boy to live with him at court. Fifty soldiers were sent by

¹The merchant probably set up his shop outside of the village so that he would not have to pay taxes to Kṛṣṇadāsa's father.

²According to a note added to the *bhāvaprakāsha* by HARIRĀYAJĪ himself or by DVĀRAKĀDĀSA PARĪKHA, the modern editor of the text, the capital of the kingdom of Gujarāt was at the time of Kṛṣṇadāsa's father's crime (c. A.D. 1509 or 1510) at Ahmadābād. But, Mahmūd Begarha, who ruled Gujarāt until A.D. 1511, moved his capital in the last years of his reign from Ahmadābād 78 miles southeast to the city of Campāner (Muhammadābād). It is more likely, then, that the capital was at Campāner than at Ahmādābād when Kṛṣṇadāsa and his father were called to court. See PERCY BROWN, *Indian Architecture*, Vol. II: *Islamic Period* (2 vols.; Bombay: Taraporevala, 1964), vol. II, pp. 56-57.

³The king of Gujarāt during Kṛṣṇadāsa's boyhood was Mahmūd Begarha (reigned A.D. 1458-1511). H. H. DODWELL (ed.), *The Cambridge Shorter History of India* (Delhi: S. Chand, 1969), pp. 304-311.

royal order to Cilotarā to bring Kṛṣṇadāsa and his father back to the capital. The king's men reached Cilotarā in the evening and seized Kṛṣṇadāsa and his father as they were standing at the door of their house and took them back to the king. When the king asked Kṛṣṇadāsa's father if he, the headman of a village, had robbed the merchant and warned him that, if he had committed the crime, he must return the money at once, Kṛṣṇadāsa's father denied any involvement with the robbery and claimed that someone must have made a false accusation. Next, the king asked the headman if his son would tell the truth and the headman assured him that the boy would. When the king, commanding Kṛṣṇadāsa to be honest, asked him about the robbery, Kṛṣṇadāsa said that he had tried to reason with his father at the time of the crime but that his father would not accept his advice. He then went on to tell the king how his father had given the thief 1,000 rupees of the stolen money and had kept 13,000 for himself. Now, Kṛṣṇadāsa told the king, his father was suffering the consequences of the evil that he had done. When the king had heard Kṛṣṇadāsa's testimony, he told Kṛṣṇadāsa's father that he would be executed if he did not return the stolen money immediately. Kṛṣṇadāsa's father and the merchant were then sent with some soldiers back to Cilotarā to get the money.

The king said to Kṛṣṇadāsa, "You are honest; you must stay here with me."

But Kṛṣṇadāsa said in answer: "If you keep me here, what will you do with me? I will always speak truthfully and that will be the cause of misfortune for everyone. That is the way that things turned out today; therefore, I intend to become a homeless ascetic. Besides, my father has certainly no more affection for me."

The king continued to try to persuade Kṛṣṇadāsa to remain at court, but Kṛṣṇadāsa rejected his offers. Finally, the king gave up and Kṛṣṇadāsa was allowed to return to Cilotarā with his father. When Kṛṣṇadāsa and his father reached the village, Kṛṣṇadāsa's father summoned the thief and told him that Kṛṣṇadāsa had ruined them both and that the thousand rupees would have to be returned or they would both lose their lives. When the full fourteen thousand rupees had been returned to the merchant, he departed. Meanwhile, Kṛṣṇadāsa's father had been removed from his post and the king had appointed another headman for Cilotarā.

Kṛṣṇadāsa's father said to Kṛṣṇadāsa, "Son, through your wickedness I have lost my position, my income, and all of my wealth."

Kṛṣṇadāsa answered, "Father, you should be more careful of your soul (*jīva*); through such evil action (*karma*) as that which you have

done, your life both in this world and in the other world (*paraloka*)¹ will be wasted. It is good that you have been freed from the office of headman; the retention of that position would only have led to more sin."

In reply to this, Kṛṣṇadāsa's father said: "It is your destiny in this life to be a religious ascetic² and now you have made me an ascetic also³ so what do you propose to do now?"

Kṛṣṇadāsa said that he wanted permission to depart so that he might give up the worldly life. His father readily consented to let Kṛṣṇadāsa leave home and said that he would not be at all sorry if he never saw him again. Upon receiving his father's permission, Kṛṣṇadāsa left Cilotarā and set out to travel to Braj and visit all of the holy places there. After some time, Kṛṣṇadāsa entered Braj and made his way to Vishrānta Ghāṭa⁴ in the city of Mathurā, where he bathed in the holy Yamunā. He then wandered in Braj for a period or time. In the course of his wanderings, he heard that a temple had been constructed for a divine *svarūpa* called Devadamana (i.e., Shri Govardhananāthajī) and that, to the great joy of the *Brajvāsis*,⁵ the *svarūpa* would be formally installed in the temple in three or four days.⁶ Ever since Devadamana had appeared out of Girirāja (i.e., the sacred hill of Govardhana) there had been happiness for everyone in the region and the hopes and wishes of everyone there had been fulfilled. Kṛṣṇadāsa decided that he, too, would go to have *darshana* of Devadamana and departed for Govardhana. When Kṛṣṇadāsa had *darshana*, which happened to be at the *rājabhoga* period, Shri

¹By the term *paraloka*, Kṛṣṇadāsa was referring to the rewards of *svarga*, the heavenly other world which a worldly man like Kṛṣṇadāsa's father would look forward to after death. Only by very righteous conduct could one expect to enjoy the pleasures of *svarga* before returning to an earthly birth. See MONIER-WILLIAMS, pp. 587, 1281.

²The word which Kṛṣṇadāsa's father used for "religious ascetic" was *fakīr*, one of the several Arabic words that had been adopted into sixteenth-century Braj Bhāṣā. As in modern Hindi usage, the word *fakīr* was used in Braj Bhāṣā to designate either a Hindu or Muslim wandering ascetic. See RĀMACANDRA VARMMĀ, *Mānaka Hindi Koṣa* (5 vols; Allāhbādः Hindi Sāhitya Sammelana, 1963), IV, 2. PREMANĀRĀYANA TĀNDANA (ed.), *Braja Bhāṣā Sūra-Koṣa* (2 vols.; Lucknow: Lucknow University, 1962), vol. II, pp. 1145.

³Kṛṣṇadāsa's father meant that his son, by testifying against him before the king, had destroyed all of his material possessions so that he would have to live like an ascetic who had renounced the world.

⁴See p. 111 above.

⁵See p. 125 above.

⁶The most likely date for Kṛṣṇadāsa's initiation into Vallabhācārya's *Sampradāya* is A.D. 1512. The temple of Shri Govardhananāthaji, which was built to replace the simple shrine that Vallabhācārya had had erected in A.D. 1494, was completed after 20 years from the beginning of construction in A.D. 1500. There were, thus, eight years between the initiation of Kṛṣṇadāsa and the completion of the temple in A.D. 1520. The *bhāvaprakāsha* here, however, places Kṛṣṇadāsa's initiation only a few days before the completion of the temple.

Ācāryajī himself was conducting the *ārati* ceremony.¹ While Kṛṣṇadāsa was having *darshana*, Shrī Govardhanadhara fixed his gaze upon him and completely stole away his heart.²

Later, Shrī Govardhanadhara said to Shrī Ācāryajī: "Kṛṣṇadāsa, who has been suffering from the pain of separation from me for several days, has arrived. I have seen him."

Shrī Ācāryajī Mahāprabhu then went to Kṛṣṇadāsa and told him to come with him. Upon hearing Shrī Ācāryajī's words, Kṛṣṇadāsa flung himself upon the ground and made this supplication: "Mahārāja! I have come by your mercy, so please grant me refuge."

Shrī Ācāryajī then sent Kṛṣṇadāsa to bathe in Rudrakunḍa³ and warned him to hurry because Shrī Govardhananāthajī was watching him. As soon as Kṛṣṇadāsa had bathed, he returned to Shrī Ācāryajī at the temple. Shrī Ācāryajī seated him before Shrī Govardhananāthajī and initiated him by giving him the *mantra* of the divine name and by having him dedicate himself completely to Shrī Govardhananāthajī. Kṛṣṇadāsa was a *daivī jīva*. At the time of his initiation, Kṛṣṇadāsa experienced all of the divine *līlā* and was moved to sing a *kīrtana* that greatly pleased Shrī Ācāryajī. Then Shrī Ācāryajī had the period of *darshana* of Shrī Govardhananāthajī terminated. Meanwhile, work on the new beautiful solidly-built temple, which would replace the original inadequate structure, was nearing completion.

On the auspicious day of the *Akṣayatṛtīyā* festival⁴ the new temple of Shrī Govardhananāthajī was finally finished and the desires of Pūrmamalla Khatrī, who had financed the construction of the temple, were fulfilled.⁵ Shrī Ācāryajī summoned Sadū Pāṇḍe and told him that, as soon as Shrī Govardhananāthajī was formally installed in the newly-completed temple, he should be in charge of the performance of the *sevā* of Shrī Govardhananāthajī.

But Sadū Pāṇḍe humbly asked Shrī Ācāryajī to excuse him from the responsibility of performing the *sevā* on the grounds that he was only an ordinary *Brajvāsi* and knew nothing of the rituals and procedures of *sevā* and was, besides, very busy with domestic concerns. Sadū Pāṇḍe suggested that some Bengālis who were living nearby at Rādhākuṇḍa and who were accustomed to pass the day in singing religious songs be

¹ *Ārati* is a common kind of Hindu worship which is done by moving a lighted lamp in front of a deity.

² "Shrī Govardhanadhara" is another name for Shrī Govardhananāthajī. See note number 4, p. 116 above.

³ Rudrakunḍa is one of the pools on Govardhana Hill.

⁴ The *Akṣayatṛtīyā* is a Hindu festival celebrated on the third day of the bright half of the month of Vaishākha.

⁵ HARIRĀJĀ, pp. 141-144.

given the duty of performing Shrī Govardhananāthajī's *sevā*. Shrī Ācāryaji then had Sadū Pāṇḍe call the Bengālīs. Shrī Ācāryajī entrusted the *sevā* of Shrī Govardhananāthajī to twenty or twenty-five of the Bengālīs and granted them permission to build their huts at Rudrakūṇḍa on the lower slope of Govardhana Hill.¹ At the same time, Kṛṣṇadāsa was put in charge of collecting donations given to Shrī Govardhananāthajī; he was to gather contributions from areas outside of Braj and then turn the contributions over to the Bengālīs for the use of Shrī Govardhananāthajī. This was the *sevā* that Kṛṣṇadāsa was to perform. Shrī Ācāryajī instructed the Bengālīs in the manner in which they were to perform the sacred *sevā* and left the *sevā* in their hands. Kṛṣṇadāsa departed for other regions to gather contributions and offerings. When the new temple was finished, Rāmadāsa Cauhāna the Rājpūt left his earthly body and entered into *līlā*.² Then the Bengālīs were left in complete charge of the *sevā* of Shrī Govardhananāthajī.

[At this point begin the *prasāṅgas* of Kṛṣṇadāsa's *vārtā*.]

Prasāṅga 1

Once, Kṛṣṇadāsa went to Dvārikā in order to collect offerings from the Vaiṣṇavas who were having *darshana* of Shrī Ranachodajī, a *svarūpa* of Shrī Kṛṣṇa which was present in that city. On the road to Dvārikā, Kṛṣṇadāsa and the Vaiṣṇava who had come along to help him came to the village in which Mīrāṇbāī lived. Kṛṣṇadāsa and the Vaiṣṇava went into Mīrāṇbāī's house. In Mīrāṇbāī's house were several saints, religious leaders, and *svāmīs*—all of whom followed doctrines (*mārga*) different from the *Puṣṭimārga* of Shrī Ācāryajī; some of these men had been visiting Mīrāṇbāī for ten days and others had been in her house for twenty days, but none of them had yet received a gift. They were waiting to be given donations. Just as soon as Kṛṣṇadāsa had gone into Mīrāṇbāī's house, he announced that he was going to leave. When Mīrāṇbāī heard that Kṛṣṇadāsa did not intend to stay, she said to him, "Have the mercy to stay here for a few days."

But Kṛṣṇadāsa answered, "I will stay wherever there are Vaiṣṇava

¹The Bengālīs to whom Vallabhācārya entrusted the conduct of the *sevā* of Shrī Nāthajī were members of the Vaiṣṇava sect founded by the great Bengālī *bhakta* Kṛṣṇa Caitanya. Evidently, at this early period Vallabhācārya did not have enough willing and qualified *sevakas* within his own *Sampradāya* to restrict the conduct of the permanent divine *sevā* to his followers. Although the Bengālīs were later dismissed from the temple of Shrī Nāthajī, the philosophy of *bhakti* that developed within the Caitanya *Sampradāya* seems to have had an important effect on the thought of the Vallabha *Sampradāya*. See pp. 31–32 in Part I above for a brief discussion of Caitanya and his sect.

²Rāmadāsa Cauhāna the Rājpūt was the man whom Vallabhācārya left in charge of the *sevā* of Shrī Nāthajī at the small shrine built in A.D. 1494. See HARIRĀYAJĪ, pp. 252–255.

sevakas of Shri Ācāryaji, but I will not keep the company of those who follow the doctrines of other teachers."

Then Mīrānbāī offered a gift of eleven *mohauras*¹ for Shri Nāthajī, but Kṛṣṇadāsa refused to accept her money. He said to her, "You are not a *sevaka* of Shri Ācāryaji, so I will not even touch your *mohauras*." As soon as he had said this, Kṛṣṇadāsa got up and left the house.

Later, the Vaiṣṇava who was travelling with Kṛṣṇadāsa asked him why he had rejected Mīrānbāī's donation to Shri Govardhananāthajī. In answer to the Vaiṣṇava's question, Kṛṣṇadāsa said: "What of the gift? We will receive many offerings from Vaiṣṇavas. Shri Govardhananāthajī is not suffering from any poverty. A great number of religious leaders and *svāmīs* representing several different sects had gathered in Mīrānbāī's house; I cut all of those proud people down to size. All of those people have been waiting there at Mīrānbāī's house for many days in hopes of getting donations, but I, a *Shūdra sevaka* of Shri Ācāryaji, would not accept a gift of many *mohauras*. Everyone of those saints and *svāmīs* will think to himself, 'If the *sevaka* is so scrupulous, then how much more so his *guru* must be.' Besides; how can Shri Ācāryaji accept the offerings of followers of paths other than his own?"

Kṛṣṇadāsa was, thus, a strict *Bhagavadiya* who had received the very highest degree of favour.

[*Bhāvaprakāsha*

The *Shikṣāpātra*² says that association with members of alien sects is the source of the greatest misery for those who belong to Shri Nāthajī. Happiness comes through refusing even to speak with followers of other doctrines. If one should speak with such people, then one's *rasa* will be obscured as if by a shadow. It was necessary to tell about Kṛṣṇadāsa's going to the house of Mīrānbāī in order to illustrate the need for the sectarians to keep to themselves. One of the most important doctrines is the warning that one should associate only with those who follow the same doctrines that one follows. And if one should meet a stranger, then one should keep one's own *dharma* hidden.

Shri Gusāñjī himself has stated in his *Catuḥshloki*: "In a country filled with the followers of strange doctrines one should worship Shri Nāthajī firmly and constantly while keeping one's own *dharma* concealed."

¹A *mohaura* was a gold coin of great value.

²The *Shikṣāpātra* is an important work written in Sanskrit by HARIRĀYAJĪ as an instruction book for the *Pusimārga*. See HARIRĀYAJĪ. *Bade Shikṣāpātra* (Bombay: Sheṭha Nārāyaṇadāsa and Jethānanda Āsanamala Trust Fund, 1962).

Just as the best foods are carefully guarded so that they may continue to be suitable as food offerings to Shri Thākurajī, just so is it essential to protect the Vaiṣṇava *dharma*.]¹

Prasāṅga 2

And so the Bengālis were performing the *shṛṅgāra* of Shri Govardhananāthajī. Shri Ācāryajī had provided for all of Shri Govardhananāthajī's ornaments of blue enamel and he had had all necessary garments and a crown (*mukuta*) of peacock feathers made for Shri Govardhananāthajī. The Bengālis were in charge of the *sevā* of the divine *svarūpa*. But the Bengālis gathered up all of the offerings coming in to Shri Govardhananāthajī and sent them all over to their own *gurus* in Brñdāvana.

When Shri Ācāryajī later made Kṛṣṇadāsa *adhikārī* over the temple of Shri Govardhananāthajī, one of Kṛṣṇadāsa's duties was to bring supplies from Āgrā and from Mathurā. He used to spend several days in performing this task.

Bhāvaprakāsha

Avadhūtadāsa, who roamed continually through Braj, was one of Shri Ācāryajī's *sevakas*. He was a *Bhagavadiya* who had received great favour. On earth, he was a native of the village of Aḍīṅga,² but in *līlā* he is one of the unwed *gopīs* who want to marry Shri Kṛṣṇa.³ When Shri Thākurajī appeared, as is narrated in the "Rāsapañcādhyaī", then all of the *bhaktas* who were having *darshana* of the sacred form closed their eyes and were so completely entranced that they seemed to be *yogīs*. Those *bhaktās* were manifested on earth; one of them, named Ketinī, became Avadhūtadāsa.

Avadhūtadāsa was born in the house of a Sanodhiyā Brāhmaṇa in Aḍīṅga; but, during a famine in Braj, Avadhūtadāsa's parents left him, while still a boy, with a *baniyā* (merchant) and went away to the east. When Avadhūtadāsa reached the age of fifteen, he left the *baniyā*'s house and went to the city of Mathurā. In that city he had *darshana* of Shri Ācāryajī and begged, "Mahārāja! Please take me into your protection." Shri Ācāryajī told Avadhūtadāsa to accompany him to Shri Govardhananāthajī's temple on Govardhana Hill so

¹See pp. 40–41 above in Part I.

²GROWSE, pp. 62, 83, 380–381.

³According to Vallabhācārya there are three kinds of *gopīs* in *līlā*: *pravāhapanuṣṭi gopīs* who look upon Kṛṣṇa as their son; *maryādā-puṣṭi gopīs* who want to marry Kṛṣṇa; and *puṣṭi-puṣṭi-gopīs* who are already married but have given up all social restrictions to love Kṛṣṇa. See p. 90 in Part I above and: GOVARDHANA NĀTHA SHUKLA, *Kavivara Paramā-nandadāsa our Vallabha Sampradāya* (Aligarh: Bhārata Prakāshana Mandira, 1964), pp. 211–212.

that he might there take refuge with Shri Govardhananāthajī. When the two reached Girirāja, Shri Ācāryajī told the boy to bathe in Govindakunda and then to come to the temple. After the completion of the *rājabhoga* offering to Shri Govardhanadhara, Shri Ācāryajī summoned Avadhūtadāsa and initiated him in the presence of Shri Govardhanadhara. Then Avadhūtadāsa made the following request of Shri Ācāryajī : "Mahāraja, I would like to keep Shri Govardhananāthajī in my heart and wander continually throughout Braj."

Then Shri Ācāryajī took water in his hand and sprinkled it on Avadhūtadāsa; by this action, Avadhūtadāsa came to have an *alaukika* body and neither hunger nor thirst nor any other false claim of the body could hinder him and he remained absorbed in mental *sevā*. After this, Shri Ācāryajī performed the *rājabhoga ārati* ceremony. Avadhūtadāsa was completely filled with the divine *svarūpa* and, while constantly on the move in Braj, was always drowned in the bliss of the divine *svarūpa*.]

One day, Shri Govardhananāthajī instructed Avadhūtadāsa to tell Kṛṣṇadāsa the *Adhikāri* that the Bengālis must be expelled because they were infringing on his own glory by seating their goddess beside him when offering food to him. Avadhūtadāsa kept Shri Govardhananāthajī's words in his mind. One day, Avadhūtadāsa met Kṛṣṇadāsa on the road. Avadhūtadāsa asked Kṛṣṇadāsa where he was going and Kṛṣṇadāsa explained that he was on his way from Govardhana to Mathurā to buy provisions. Avadhūtadāsa next inquired who was doing the *sevā* of Shri Govardhananāthajī and Kṛṣṇadāsa replied that the *sevā* was in the care of some Bengālis. Avadhūtadāsa then told Kṛṣṇadāsa that Shri Govardhananāthajī was very unhappy about the presence of the image of the Bengālis' goddess during the offering of food and that it was Shri Govardhananāthajī's desire that the Bengālis be immediately expelled from the performance of *sevā*. Avadhūtadāsa went on to say that Shri Govardhananāthajī had made clear that it was Kṛṣṇadāsa's duty to remove the Bengālis. Kṛṣṇadāsa pointed out to Avadhūtadāsa that, since Shri Ācāryajī had given the Bengālis the responsibility of conducting the *sevā* in the temple, only by order of Shri Ācāryajī's successor Shri Gusānijī could the Bengālis be evicted. Then Avadhūtadāsa said to Kṛṣṇadāsa, "You must go to Shri Gusānijī's home in Adela¹ and bring back an order for the expulsion of the Bengālis from him. Then you may get rid of the Bengālis."

Kṛṣṇadāsa turned around at once and returned to Govardhana Hill. There, he told the Bengālis that he was going to Adela on business.

¹See p. 112 above.

Later, he told all of the *sevakas* and *Brajvāsis* to perform their duties well while he was away visiting Shri Gusānijī in Adela. Then, Kṛṣṇadāsa took leave of Shri Govardhananāthaji and set out for Adela. After fifteen days, Kṛṣṇadāsa reached Adela and prostrated himself before Shri Gusānijī. Shri Gusānijī asked Kṛṣṇadāsa why he had left the *sevā* of Shri Govardhananāthaji and come to Adela. In answer to this, Kṛṣṇadāsa explained that the Bengālis who were conducting the *sevā* of Shri Govardhananāthaji were in the habit of setting an image of their goddess beside Shri Govardhananāthaji at the *rājabhoga* food offering, that the Bengālis were sending all of the gifts made to Shri Govardhananāthaji to their *gurus* in Brndāban, and that the Bengālis were very unpopular with the *bhaktas* of Shri Nāthajī and would be the cause of a serious quarrel if they remained in charge of the *sevā* any longer. Kṛṣṇadāsa finished his statement by requesting Shri Gusānijī to order that the Bengālis be sent away.

Shri Gusānijī replied, "Some time ago, Shri Gopināthajī¹ made a tour of the eastern countries² and collected there donations worth a hundred thousand rupees. When Shri Gopināthajī returned home to Adela, he decided to give all of the valuable gifts that he had received to Shri Govardhananāthaji. Gopināthajī then set out with the hundred thousand rupees for Govardhana Hill; when he reached there, he spent the money by having plates and bowls made of gold and silver for Shri Nāthajī. As soon as Shri Gopināthajī had performed the *shringāra sevā* and departed for Adela, the Bengālis gathered up all of those gold and silver platters and bowls and other wealth and sent it all to their gurus' establishment in Brndābana. I got news of all of this, but what could I do about it? The Bengālis were invested by Shri Ācāryajī; so how can they possibly be removed?"

Kṛṣṇadāsa answered, "Mahārāja! Don't talk like this. It is the desire of Shri Govardhananāthajī that the Bengālis be thrown out. Somehow, I must evict them."

Shri Gusānijī agreed, "If there is danger of strife, then the Bengālis must certainly be sent away."

Kṛṣṇadāsa said, "Mahārāja, please write two letters for me; one should be addressed to Rājā Todaramalla³ and the other to Rājā Birabala."⁴

¹Gopinātha was Vallabhācārya's elder son; see pp. 52–53 above.

²Gopinātha's "tour of the eastern countries" was his pilgrimage to Jagannātha-Puri in Orissa.

³Rājā Todaramalla, a Hindu, was an important minister and adviser of the Emperor Akbar. He is especially well-known for his revenue reforms. See: WOLSELEY HAIG and RICHARD BURN (ed.), *The Mughul Period*, Vol. IV of *The Cambridge History of India* (6 vols.; Delhi: S. Chand, 1963), pp. 110–119, 459–462.

⁴Rājā Birabala, A Hindu, was a close friend of Akbar. See: DODWELL, pp. 370–371.

Śrī Gusañjī wrote the two letters as Kṛṣṇadāsa had requested. The letters went as follows: "Kṛṣṇadāsa is at Govardhana Hill; do whatever he asks you to do. I must have the Bengālis evicted and replaced with *sevakas*. Kṛṣṇadāsa is the *adhikārī* of Śrī Govardhananāthaji, so whatever he may do is acceptable to me." Śrī Gusañjī gave the two letters to Kṛṣṇadāsa. Kṛṣṇadāsa took the letters, prostrated himself before Śrī Gusañjī, and left Adela. After a journey of several days, Kṛṣṇadāsa reached Āgrā. There, he showed the two letters, both signed by Śrī Gusañjī, to Rājā Todaramalla and to Rājā Bīrabala. When both of the courtiers had read the letters, they said that they would act according to Kṛṣṇadāsa's instructions.

Kṛṣṇadāsa told them: "Now I am going to the temple of Śrī Govardhananāthajī to evict the Bengālis. Please settle matters favourably according to Śrī Gusañjī's wishes if the Bengālis' *gurus* in Brīndāvana should make a complaint before the Emperor Akbar."

Both Todaramalla and Bīrabala assured Kṛṣṇadāsa that he could confidently carry out Śrī Gusañjī's commands with the knowledge that any difficulties that might arise at the imperial court would be efficiently taken care of. Kṛṣṇadāsa then left Āgrā on his way home to Govardhana, passing through Mathurā on the way. Before Kṛṣṇadāsa reached Govardhana Hill, he met Avadhūtadāsa on the road. When Avadhūtadāsa asked Kṛṣṇadāsa why so much time had been allowed to go by without any move to expel the Bengālis, Kṛṣṇadāsa told him that he had gotten Śrī Gusañjī's order to cast out the Bengālis and that he intended to carry out that order at once. As soon as Kṛṣṇadāsa reached Govardhana Hill, he put a plan that he had devised into operation.

First of all, Kṛṣṇadāsa went up to Rudrakunda and had fires set in the huts belonging to the Bengālis. Then he had his men shout loudly. The Bengālis, who were performing their duties in Śrī Govardhananāthajī's temple, heard the commotion and went to see what had happened. When they saw that their huts were ablaze, they deserted the *sevā* of Śrī Nāthajī and ran down the hill to try to save their huts. They set to work putting out the fires. While the Bengālis were engaged with the fires in their huts, Kṛṣṇadāsa stationed his *Brajvāsīs* at strategic places in and around the temple of Śrī Govardhananāthajī and warned them not to let any Bengālis climb back up the hill. He also appointed Brāhmaṇa *bhitariyā sevakas*¹ to perform the *sevā* of Śrī Nāthajī. Then, Kṛṣṇadāsa armed himself with a stout staff and went to the foot of the hill. When the Bengālis had extinguished the fires in their huts, they began to climb back up the hill to the temple.

Kṛṣṇadāsa, however, stood in the way of the Bengālis and said to

¹See p. 49 in Part I above for a discussion of the office of *bhitariyā*.

them : "You are no longer responsible for the performance of the *sevā*; I have designated other attendants to conduct the *sevā*."

When the Bengālis heard the words of Kṛṣṇadāsa, they prepared to fight, crying out—"Shrī Govardhanānāthajī is our Lord, for Shrī Ācāryajī Mahāprabhu entrusted him to us."

With that the battle began. Kṛṣṇadāsa put all of the Bengālis to flight. After their defeat, the Bengālis went to Mathurā and told the whole story of the fight at Govardhana Hill to their gurus Rūpa and Sanātana.¹ The Bengālis complained that Kṛṣṇadāsa, who was a lowly Shūdra, had dared to have their huts burnt down, beat them, and throw them out of their right to perform the *sevā* of Shrī Nāthajī. At the very same moment that the Bengālis were telling their version of the story, Kṛṣṇadāsa was on his way to Mathurā riding in a chariot and accompanied by fifty armed *Brajvāsīs*. When Kṛṣṇadāsa arrived in Mathurā, he went straight to the house of Rūpa and Sanātana.

Full of wrath, Rūpa and Sanātana upbraided Kṛṣṇadāsa, "Shūdra! Why did you² beat these Brāhmaṇas? The Emperor Akbar will hear of this matter. What will you say then?"

Kṛṣṇadāsa answered, "Yes, I am a Shūdra, but I don't make Brāhmaṇas my *sevakas*. You, however, are not *Agnihotrī* Brāhmaṇas; you³ are, in fact, only *Kāyasthas*.⁴ Although you are *Kāyasthas*, you have Brāhmaṇas prostrate themselves before you and you make them your *sevakas*. You yourselves will come to grief if you testify before the emperor, for your own position is very weak. I, on the other hand, will give testimony. You had better think very carefully before you take any action."

When Rūpa and Sanātana heard what Kṛṣṇadāsa had to say, they said, "You know the facts of the matter and our Bengālis know the facts of the matter, but we know nothing about it."

Next, the disappointed Bengālis took the case to the governor (*hākim*)

¹Rūpa and Sanātana, who were brothers, were two of the famous Six Gosvāmis of Bṛndābana who established the philosophical and organizational basis of the Caitanya *Sampradāya*. Although the literature of the Caitanya *Sampradāya* holds that Rūpa and Sanātana were Brāhmaṇas of South Indian origin, sources outside of Caitanya's *Sampradāya*—of which the *Caurāsi Vaiṣnavan kī Vārtā* is one—often make them *Kāyasthas*. See: SUSHIL KUMAR DE, *Early History of the Vaisnava Faith and Movement in Bengal* (Calcutta: Firma K. L. Mukhopadhyay, 1961), pp. 146–165.

²In the text of the *vārtā* Rūpa and Sanātana abuse Kṛṣṇadāsa by addressing him with the intimate second-person pronoun *tū*.

³Kṛṣṇadāsa repays the two gurus of the Bengālis for the demeaning way that they address him by addressing them with the plural familiar second-person pronoun *tum* when they would expect to be addressed with the formal plural second-person pronoun *āpu*.

⁴The *Kāyastha* caste is a clerical caste of North India which is usually considered by persons outside the caste to belong to either the Vaishya or Shūdra *varṇa* and by those within the caste to be of the Kṣatriya *varna*.

of Mathurā. They said to him, "Kṛṣṇadāsa has expelled us from the *sevā* of Shrī Govardhananāthajī. Please restore us somehow to our rightful position."

While the Bengālis were giving their account, Kṛṣṇadāsa came up to the governor. The governor observed Kṛṣṇadāsa's strong personality and invited him to be seated nearby. Then he addressed Kṛṣṇadāsa as follows: "You are an important man, for you hold the office of Shrī Govardhananāthajī's *adhikārī*; please pardon these Bengālis for their shortcomings. Let what is past be past. Restore them to their duty and let them again do the *sevā*."

Kṛṣṇadāsa answered, "I won't restore them and they will never again serve as my employees. They were my employees and they fought against me. I cannot excuse them. Although fire broke out in their huts, they knew that I would have new huts built for them. When they abandoned the *sevā* of Shrī Govardhananāthajī and ran down the hill to save their huts, they lost the privilege of conducting the divine *sevā*.¹ And now you claim that I should restore them to the *sevā*. I will write a letter about this matter to Shrī Gausāñjī and I will obey whatever order he sends to me."

The governor agreed that Kṛṣṇadāsa should write to Shrī Gausāñjī for a solution to the problem. Then Kṛṣṇadāsa returned to Govardhana Hill and the Bengālis remained in Bṛndāvana.

Some time later, the Bengālis gathered together and took their complaint against Kṛṣṇadāsa to the Emperor Akbar in Āgrā. When Akbar had heard the complaint, he asked who Kṛṣṇadāsa was and ordered that he be brought to the court to answer the charge of having removed the Bengāli Brāhmaṇas from their worship. At that point Rājā Todaramalla and Bīrabala stepped forward and said to Akbar: "Shrī Govardhananāthajī is Shrī Viṭṭhalanātha Gausāñjī's divine Lord. Formerly, Shrī Gausāñjī gave these Bengālis the duty of the performing of the *sevā* and he allowed them a salary. Now, however, he has decided to dismiss them."

Akbar then said, "In that case, these Bengālis are making a dishonest complaint. How else are employees to be treated?" Then, Akbar commanded that Kṛṣṇadāsa be summoned and that the matter be settled according to Kṛṣṇadāsa's wishes.

Akbar's men arrived at Girirāja and escorted Kṛṣṇadāsa, riding in his chariot and accompanied by ten or twenty of his own men, to Āgrā. In Āgrā, Kṛṣṇadāsa first met with Rājā Todaramalla and Bīrabala. The two courtiers told him that they had already replied to the complaint of the Bengālis once, but that they would have to reply again on that very day.

¹A *bhakta* or servant of Shrī Kṛṣṇa must never consider worldly matters and possessions more important than the care of Shrī Kṛṣṇa. By violating this fundamental rule when they ran from the *sevā* of Shrī Govardhananāthajī to put out the fires in their huts, the Bengālis forfeited their right to perform the divine *sevā*.

They told Kṛṣṇadāsa that he would have to remain in Āgrā all that day.

When the period of audience (*darbār*) arrived, Rājā Ṭoḍaramalla and Bīrabala came to the Emperor Akbar and said, "Kṛṣṇadāsa, Śrī Govardhananāthaji's *adhikārī*, has arrived. He has told us that he does not intend to restore the Bengālis to their former position in the temple. He hired them to be his employees and now he has fired them."

Akbar agreed with this and said that the Bengālis could be reinstated only by Kṛṣṇadāsa's wish. He said, further, that Kṛṣṇadāsa had done nothing unjust. He finished his judgement by ordering that the Bengālis be sent away. Rājā Ṭoḍaramalla and Bīrabala went to the Bengālis and warned them that, since the Emperor Akbar had ordered them to be sent away, they had better leave quietly without any more argument. All of the Bengālis then went away disappointed and remained in Brīndāvana.

As soon as Kṛṣṇadāsa had gotten back to Girirāja, he called two messengers and sent them with a letter to Śrī Gусānijī. In the letter, Kṛṣṇadāsa said: "The Bengālis have been expelled by your order and the testimony before the Emperor Akbar has been concluded. Now the dispute is absolutely finished and the Bengālis have been forced to leave the royal court in Āgrā. So, please show your mercy and come here."

When Śrī Gусānijī had received and read the letter, he left Adela at once. When Śrī Gусānijī reached the temple on Govardhana Hill, he summoned Kṛṣṇadāsa and, in the presence of Śrī Govardhananāthaji, placed upon him the mantle of the office of *adhikārī*. After this had been done, Śrī Gусānijī said to Kṛṣṇadāsa, "Kṛṣṇadāsa, your expulsion of the Bengālis was an excellent act of *sevā*. Now I want you to be responsible for managing everything for Śrī Govardhananāthaji. Now please take this opportunity to say anything that you want without hesitation. All of the *sevakas* and attendants are under your authority, what more is there? You have performed such wonderful *sevā* that Śrī Govardhananāthaji will do whatever you say. You have received the favour of Śrī Ācāryajī; everything will prosper under your authority. Perform well the *sevā* of Śrī Govardhananāthaji. Take care."

Kṛṣṇadāsa prostrated himself before Śrī Govardhananāthaji and Śrī Gусānijī and set about doing the *sevā* of the supervision of everything at the temple. From that day the institution of the office (*gādi*) of Śrī Nāthaji's *adhikārī* was begun. By the command of Śrī Gусānijī, Kṛṣṇadāsa was the first to hold this office.

When the Bengālis heard that Śrī Gусānijī had come to Govardhana Hill and was performing the *shringāra* of Śrī Nāthaji there, they all gathered together and came to see Śrī Gусānijī. When they came into his presence, they made the following entreaty: "Śrī Ācāryajī called upon us to take care of the *sevā* of Śrī Govardhananāthaji and then

Kṛṣṇadāsa expelled us from that *sevā*. Now please reinstate us."

Śrī Gusāñjī answered the Bengālis in these words : "All of you are to blame for your misfortune since you left the *sevā* of Śrī Nāthajī to run down the hill to your huts. Śrī Govardhananāthajī does not wish to reinstate you; therefore, you may not be reinstated."

Then all of the Bengālis began pleading with Śrī Gusāñjī : "Since you have forbidden us to do the *sevā* of Śrī Nāthajī, we have no way to make a living; how will we eat? While we were allowed to conduct the *sevā* of Śrī Nāthajī we had plenty to eat and drink. Please tell us to take care of some other *sevā*; please give us some other divine Lord so that we may maintain ourselves."

In answer to the pleas of the Bengālis, Śrī Gusāñjī gave them Śrī Madanamohanajī,¹ the *svarūpa* to which Śrī Gopināthajī had performed *sevā*. The Bengālis took Śrī Madanamohanajī with them back to Brāndā-bana and carried on the *sevā* of that *svarūpa* there.

[*Bhāvaprakāsha*

Baladevajī is of the essence of *maryādā*;² therefore, the form of the Lord for which he does *sevā* is also of the essence of *maryādā*. The Bengālis were given the *svarūpa* called Śrī Madanamohanajī because worship (*pūjā*) with the *maryādā* attitude was appropriate to them. In this way, Śrī Gusāñjī placated the Bengālis.]

Then Śrī Gusāñjī placed Sāṅcorā Gujarātī Brāhmaṇas in the office of *bhitariyās* in charge of *sevā*. He made Rāmadāsa the chief of the *bhitariyās*.

[*Bhāvaprakāsha*

Rāmadāsa was a Sāṅcorā Brāhmaṇa from Gujarāt. In the divine *lilā*, Rāmadāsa is a girl named Manoramā who is *sakhī* of Śrī Candrāvalī and attends to her needs. Kṛṣṇadāsa, who has received divine favour, appears in the *lilā* of Śrī Svāminījī and Śrī Thākurajī as the clever maiden called Lalitā who may order all of the sweets and delicacies that are offered to Śrī Govardhananāthajī; in just the same way, Rāmadāsa, who was the chief *bhitariyā*, in his nature as Manoramā is to wait on Śrī Gusāñjī.

¹There is a *svarūpa* called Śrī Madanamohanajī, which may be the same *svarūpa* that was given to the Bengālis, in the possession of the chief descendant of Viṭṭhalanātha's seventh son Ghanashyāma; the *svarūpa* has a *haveli* at Kāmabana in Bharatpur district, Rājasthān. See : PRABHU DAYĀLA MĪTALA, *Braj ke Dharma-Sampradāyon kā Itihāsa* (Delhi : National Publishing House, 1968), p. 276.

²Vallabhācārya's elder son Gopināthā, who is said to have followed the *maryādā mārga* (see pp. 52, 73 and 75 of Part I above), is considered by many followers of Vallabhācārya to have been a manifestation of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's brother Baladeva (see pp. 38–39, 52 of Part I above).

Manoramā took birth as a boy named Rāmadāsa in the house of a Sāncorā Brāhmaṇa in Gujarāt. When Rāmadāsa reached the age of twelve, both his mother and his father died. A little later, Rāmadāsajī set out for Dvārikā in order to have *darshana* of Shri Raṇachodajī. While Rāmadāsa was in Dvārikā, he had *darshana* of Shri Ācāryajī who was at that time giving religious instruction¹ in the vicinity of the temple of Shri Raṇachodajī. As soon as Rāmadāsajī had heard the teachings from the holy mouth of Shri Ācāryajī, he realized that Shri Ācāryajī was a divine manifestation and that he would find spiritual satisfaction only if he took refuge with Shri Ācāryajī. When Shri Ācāryajī had finished giving instruction, Rāmadāsa prostrated himself before him and asked him for spiritual asylum. Shri Ācāryajī told Rāmadāsa to bathe in order that he might receive initiation. After Rāmadāsa had bathed and been initiated, Shri Ācāryajī told him to begin performing the *sevā* of Bhagavān. Rāmadāsa then said that he had with him the divine image before which his father had worshipped and that he would like Shri Ācāryajī to permit him to do *sevā* for that image. Shri Ācāryajī gave his consent and had Rāmadāsa's image bathed in *pañcāmrta*.² Rāmadāsa remained several days with Shri Ācāryajī, learning from him the correct methods of performing *sevā*. After a time, Rāmadāsa made the following request of Shri Ācāryajī: "Mahārāja! I have not read any of the scriptures, but I have an intense yearning to study your book."

When Shri Ācāryajī had given instruction in his book³ such vivid experience of the Braj *lilā* appeared in Rāmadāsa's heart that he was moved to compose a *kirtana* on that *lilā* before Shri Ācāryajī. Rāmadāsa's *kirtana* was filled with *rasa* and gave Shri Ācāryajī great delight. Then Rāmadāsa took leave of Shri Ācāryajī and returned to his house in Gujarāt, where he continually practised the *sevā* of Shri Kṛṣṇa.

One day a Vaiṣṇava stopped at Rāmadāsa's house and Rāmadāsa, knowing that the company of a Vaiṣṇava is precious, thanked the Vaiṣṇava for having favoured him by stopping at his house and affectionately invited him to stay for a while. While talking to Rāma-

¹ Vallabhācārya, during his three pilgrimages around India, paused from time to time—especially at holy centres where great numbers of pilgrims would always be congregated—to give publicly his interpretations of passages and chapters from the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*. In so doing, Vallabhācārya attracted many followers for his *Sampradāya* and for his *Puṣṭimārga*.

² *Pañcāmrta* is a liquid mixture made up of milk, yoghurt, ghee, honey and sugar that is used in Hindu worship for the anointing of sacred images. Vallabhācārya probably had Rāmadāsa bathe his family image in *Pancāmrta* to mark its transition from an ordinary image to a divine *svarūpa* suitable to receive *Puṣṭimārgī sevā*.

³ The name of the book is not given in the text, but it is very likely that it was some form of Vallabhācārya's *Subodhini* commentary on the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*.

dāsa, the Vaiṣṇava mentioned that association with a great Vaiṣṇava named Padmanābhadāsa¹ was especially beneficial since even one moment in the company of that advanced Vaiṣṇava would bring one divine grace. Rāmadāsa decided at once that he must meet Padmanābhadāsa and, the moment the Vaiṣṇava had left his house, he took his divine *svarūpa* and set out for the city of Kannauj to visit Padmanābhadāsa. Padmanābhadāsa became very fond of Rāmadāsa and kept him in his house for a whole month. During all that time, Rāmadāsa remained thoroughly absorbed in the accounts of the *līlās* of Bhagavān which Padmanābhadāsa told him. At the end of the month, Rāmadāsa said to Padmanābhadāsa, "I had heard stories of your greatness and I have found all of them to be true; in your company I have found happiness. Now, I would like to have *darshana* of Shri Govardhananāthajī; later, perhaps I will return to your house. Please keep my holy *svarūpa* for me."

Padmanābhadāsa placed Rāmadāsa's *svarūpa* beside the sacred bed of his own image called Shri Mathureshajī.² It was at that time that Shri Gusānjī made Rāmadāsa the chief of the *bhitariyās*. Rāmadāsa enshrined Shri Nāthajī in his heart and performed his *sevā*. Later, when Padmanābhadāsa jī gave up his earthly body, Rāmadāsa's divine *svarūpa*, which was called "Shri Thākurajī", was brought to the temple of Shri Govardhananāthajī and set beside Shri Govardhananāthajī and has remained there ever since.]

Shri Gusānjī next began to make the *sevā* of Shri Govardhananāthajī more elaborate and more beautiful. He introduced the magnificent *rāja-sevā* and increased the food offerings. He expanded the number of *sevakas* and gave presents to the tailors, goldsmiths, carpenters, and all the other employees of the temple of Shri Nāthajī. And, as has been described above; he strengthened the office of Shri Nāthajī's *adhikārī*. In all of these ways, Shri Gusānjī enhanced the majesty of Shri Govardhananāthajī. Over all of the *sevakas* Shri Gusānjī set Kṛṣṇadāsa the *Adhikārī*; if any particular task should have to be done, Shri Gusānjī would ask Kṛṣṇadāsa to have it done. Shri Gusānjī used to perform the *shringāra sevā* and would not talk to anyone. Whenever a *sevaka* would ask Shri Gusānjī about some matter, Shri Gusānjī would say, "I don't know the answer, go and ask Kṛṣṇadāsa the *Adhikārī*." Thus, the precedent was set and the prestige and authority of Kṛṣṇadāsa became very great. Wherever Kṛṣṇadāsa went he was accompanied by chariots, horses, oxen, camels, wagons, and 150 men. Kṛṣṇadāsa the *Adhikārī* became

¹HARIRĀYAJĪ, *Caurāsi Vaiṣṇavaṇ*. . . ., pp. 35-46.

²This is probably the Shri Mathureshajī that is today in the hands of Viṭṭhalanātha's eldest son's descendants and is located in a temple at Jatipurā (Gopālapura)—see p. 127 above—on Govardhana Hill in Braj. See: MĪTALA, *Braj ke Dharma*. . . ., p. 276.

famous even in distant countries. Kṛṣṇadāsa was continually composing new verses and singing them before Shrī Govardhanadhara. Kṛṣṇadāsa was a Bhagavadīya who had received the divine grace.

Prasaṅga 3

One day, Shrī Govardhananāthajī instructed Kṛṣṇadāsa to get Syāmakumhāra with his *mṛdaṅga*¹ and bring him to Parāsolī² after the *shayana darshana* period³ so that *rāsalilā*⁴ might be performed there. As soon as he had received this command from Shrī Govardhananāthajī, Kṛṣṇadāsa prostrated himself before the *svarūpa* and went down from Govardhana Hill. Meanwhile, Shrī Govardhananāthajī told Syāmakumhāra to take his *mṛdaṅga* and go wherever Kṛṣṇadāsa might tell him to go.

[*Bhāvaprakāsha*

Shrī Nāthajī himself gave his command to Syāmakumhāra because Syāmakumhāra is, in *līlā*, a *sakhī* of Visākhājī. His name in *līlā* is Rasataraṅginī; Rasataraṅginī's *sevā* is the playing of the *mṛdaṅga*. Once, Visākhājī decided, after Rasataraṅginī had gone to bed, that she wanted to sing. Consequently, she awakened Rasataraṅginī and told her to accompany her singing on the *mṛdaṅga*. Rasataraṅginī, however, was too drowsy to play well and, after a short time, she stopped playing altogether. At this, Visākhājī became very angry and shouted to Rasataraṅginī, "What's wrong with your playing today?"

To this Rasataraṅginī replied crossly, "I am very sleepy; anyway, it was your idea to sing. What do you expect?"

When Visākhājī had heard these words from her *sakhī*, she snatched the *mṛdaṅga* from Rasataraṅginī and told her that she could no longer be her *sakhī* and that she would have to be born on earth. This was Rasataraṅginī's penalty for her haughty words.

Rasataraṅginī took birth in the house of a *Kumhāra*⁵ in the village of Mahābana as a boy named Syāmakumhāra. Syāmakumhāra, who was quickwitted and clever, was summoned by Shrī Gusāñjī himself

¹A *mṛdaṅga* is a cylindrical drum that is played on both ends. In most of North India the *mṛdaṅga* has been replaced by the *tabla* drums, but in the *havelis* of the Vallabha *Sampradāya* the *mṛdaṅga* is used in the musical accompaniment to *kirtana* singing.

²See p. 134 above.

³The *shayana darshana* is the last *darshana* period of the day in the *havelis* belonging to the Vallabha *Sampradāya*.

⁴The *rāsalilā* is the nocturnal dance of Shrī Kṛṣṇa with Rādhā and her *sakhis*. See p. 134 above.

⁵The Kumhāra, or Potter, caste is a low Shūdra caste. In India drummers, because they come in contact with musical instruments made of leather and clay—both materials are considered to be extremely polluting by Hindus—are almost always of low caste. Many of the drummers, like Syāmakumhāra, belong to the Kumhāra caste.

and initiated into the *Sampradāya* by him in the presence of Shri Navanītapriyaji.¹ Later, when the *sevā* of Shri Govardhananāthaji was being refined and enhanced, it occurred to Kṛṣṇadāsa that the *sevā* would be greatly improved by the addition of a *mṛdaṅga* player. It was the divine *svarūpa* Shri Govardhanadhara himself who told Kṛṣṇadāsa that there was a man named Syāmakumhāra in Gokula who was a very talented *mṛdaṅga* player. Kṛṣṇadāsa then went to Shri Gusāñjī and told him that Shri Govardhanadhara wanted a place for Syāmakumhāra to be made in his *sevā*. Shri Gusāñjī called Syāmakumhāra from Gokula and placed him in the *sevā* of Shri Nāthaji. From that day on, Syāmakumhāra played the *mṛdaṅga* in the *sevā* done before Shri Nāthaji.² That is how Syāmakumhāra came to be on Girirāja.]

Kṛṣṇadāsa went to Syāmakumhāra and told him that, after the *shayana darshana* period, he should get his *mṛdaṅga* and prepare to go to Parāsolī where Shri Govardhananāthaji intended to perform the *rāsalilā*. Syāmakumhāra told Kṛṣṇadāsa that he had already received a command from Shri Govardhananāthaji and would be ready with his *mṛdaṅga*. When the last *darshana* of the day had been completed, Kṛṣṇadāsa and Syāmakumhāra set out for Candrasarovara at Parāsolī. When they arrived there, they saw Shri Govardhanadhara and Shri Svāminījī together with all of the *sakhis*. Shri Govardhanadhara told Syāmakumhāra to begin playing his *mṛdaṅga* and Kṛṣṇadāsa to start singing *kirtana*. It was an *alaukika* night of the spring season when there were beautiful blossoms on every vine. While Syāmakumhāra played his *mṛdaṅga*, Shri Govardhanadhara began to dance with Shri Svāminījī and Kṛṣṇadāsa sang a *pada* describing their dance. Upon hearing this *pada* Shri Govardhanadhara was so delighted that he removed from his own holy neck the garland of *kusuma* and *kunda* flowers that had been placed there as an offering and gave it to Kṛṣṇadāsa. At this wonderful favour, Kṛṣṇadāsa trembled with bliss (*ānanda*). Overcome with *rasa*, he sang another *pada*. Thus, Kṛṣṇadāsa sang many *kirtanas*, Syāmakumhāra played the *mṛdaṅga* beautifully, and Shri Govardhanadhara and Shri Svāminījī performed the marvellous dance together with all of the *sakhis*. Shri

¹See pp. 116, 123 above.

²The Vallabha *Sampradāya* has developed a highly refined tradition of musical accompaniment—mainly *viñā* and *mṛdaṅga*—at the *darshana* periods in its *havelis* (temples). The musicians within the *Sampradāya* are conservative and have preserved a style of music that has vanished from most other North Indian musical traditions. In the spring of 1968 I was privileged to hear some examples of the kind of music preserved in the *Sampradāya* played by the very accomplished sitārīst Mukund Goswami who is associated with the *haveli* of His Holiness Shri Dīkṣitji Mahārāja of Bhuleshwar, Bombay.

Govardhanadhara showered all of this favour on Kṛṣṇadāsa out of regard for Śrī Ācāryaji Mahāprabhu. Then Śrī Govardhanadhara, Śrī Svāminījī, and all of the *Brajbhaktas* (i.e., the *sakhis*) vanished. Then Kṛṣṇadāsa and Syāmakumhāra returned to Gopālapura.¹

Prasaṅga 4

One day, Sūradāsajī said to Kṛṣṇadāsa, "Kṛṣṇadāsa! You have composed a great many *kirtanas*, but in all of them the influence of my *kirtanas* can clearly be seen."

Kṛṣṇadāsa answered, "This very day, I will compose a *pada* which will be absolutely free of any influence from anything that you have composed."

Kṛṣṇadāsa sat down by himself and thought earnestly, trying to find a subject about which Sūradāsa had not already sung. But, Sūradāsa had already composed a *pada* on every *līlā* that came to his mind; Sūradāsajī had already sung of the *dānalilā* and of the *mānalilā*² and of the *līlā* of the pasturing of the cows and of all of the other *līlās*. Kṛṣṇadāsa thought very deeply about the problem and was greatly troubled by it; after three hours had passed, Kṛṣṇadāsa was all worn out and had still not found a theme for his composition. Finally, he put down his pen and paper and got up to go take the *prasāda* at the temple of Śrī Govardhanā-nāthajī.

While Kṛṣṇadāsa was gone, Śrī Govardhanadhara came into the room, and composed the initial part of a poem—in which the theme and rhyme for the whole poem were established. As soon as Śrī Govardhanadhara had written the initial part of the poem on the piece of paper that Kṛṣṇadāsa had left behind when he went out of the room, he left. This poem was on the theme of the *necukī* cow. A *necukī* cow is a cow that has had her first calf; such a cow loves her calf with such devotion that none of the cowherd *sakhās* can keep her from leaving the herd of grown cattle being taken out to pasture and running back to the corral where her calf is penned for the day. Śrī Thākuraji had entered into a group of these *necukī* cows and a particle of dust from the hoof of one of them had stuck on a lock of hair on his forehead. This was the scene that Śrī Thākuraji (i.e., Śrī Govardhanadhara) described in the partial poem that he wrote down on Kṛṣṇadāsa's paper. Later, when Kṛṣṇadāsa

¹An interesting discussion of the *rāsalilā* dance of Śrī Kṛṣṇa and the *gopis* according to Vaiṣṇava traditions, together with a description of present-day performances of the *rāsalilā* among the Vaiṣṇavas—including those who belong to Vallabhācārya's *Sampradāya*—of Gujarāt is given in the following: N. A. THOOTHI, *Vaishnavas of Gujarat* (Calcutta : Longmans, 1935), pp. 304–334. An excellent description of the *rāsalilā* may also be found in the following: MUNSHIRĀMA SHARMĀ, *Bhāratīya Sādhana aur Sūra-Sāhiyita* (Kānpur: Ācārya Shukla Sādhana-Sadana, 1961), pp. 242–258.

²See p. 103 above.

returned full of the bliss that results from taking the sacred *prasāda*,¹ he discovered the incomplete poem left by Shrī Govardhanadhara and finished it. Kṛṣṇadāsa felt very happy when he had finished the *kīrtana*. Smiling broadly, he took the *kīrtana* to Sūradāsajī.

When Sūradāsajī heard Kṛṣṇadāsa coming, he said, "Kṛṣṇadāsa, you sound very pleased with yourself today, what new *pada* have you composed?"

Kṛṣṇadāsa answered, "I have just composed a *pada* the like of which you have never created; you have never composed anything on the theme of my *pada*."

Sūradāsajī asked Kṛṣṇadāsa to read the new *pada* aloud and, when he had heard the first portion of the *pada*, Sūradāsa said, "Kṛṣṇadāsa! We are in the same position; there is no ground for rivalry between us. What is there in this *pada* that is yours? I have never sung about the *necukī* cows. It was Prabhu who told you about them. Just as I have described the holy body of Shrī Kṛṣṇa in thousands of *padas*, so have you completed the poem about the *necukī* cow."

When Kṛṣṇadāsa had heard the words of Sūradāsajī, he kept silent. Thus was Kṛṣṇadāsa a *Bhagavadiya* who had received the favour of Shrī Ācāryajī.

[*Bhāvaprakāsha*

Kṛṣṇadāsajī was the manifestation (*svarūpa*) of Lalitājī. Since Shrī Govardhananāthajī took the side of Kṛṣṇadāsa and composed the *pada* for him, Kṛṣṇadāsa could not be defeated by Sūradāsajī. Kṛṣṇadāsajī is, as has already been said, the manifestation of Lalitā and Sūradāsajī is the manifestation of Campakalatā. There is a difference in the talents granted to Lalitā and to Campakalatā. In *lilā*, Shrī Lalitājī's *sevā* is the finest *sevā*; consequently, Kṛṣṇadāsa's *sevā* is the finest here on earth. All *sevakas* show diligence, meticulousness, and an appreciation of beauty in their performance of *sevā*, but Kṛṣṇadāsa showed the greatest skill in these matters. Just as the goldsmith does not do the work of the tailor and the tailor does not produce the jewellery that is made by the goldsmith, so each individual has his own particular talent in *sevā*. Both Lalitājī and Campakalatājī are *sakhis* dear to Shrī Svāminījī and so Shrī Govardhananāthajī has affection for both of them. But a little bit of conceit arose in Kṛṣṇadāsa's heart because he had composed so many *kīrtanas*.]

Prasāṅga 5

One day, when provisions were necessary in Govardhananāthajī's

¹ See pp. 125–126 above.

temple, Kṛṣṇadāsa had an oxcart made ready, got into his own chariot, and left Govardhana Hill for Āgrā. When Kṛṣṇadāsa reached the city of Āgrā, he went at once to the main bazar in order to buy supplies. In the course of his movement through the bazar, Kṛṣṇadāsa's attention was caught by the sight of a whore teaching her daughter to dance there in the middle of the bazar. The whore's daughter was a girl of about twelve who had an excellent voice and great talent for singing and dancing and who was surpassingly beautiful. Kṛṣṇadāsa was so impressed and pleased by that young prostitute's singing that he stopped his chariot right there, got down, and pushed his way through the crowd until he could gaze upon the beauty of the girl. He stood there for some time enchanted by her singing.

[*Bhāvaprakāsha*

This *prasaṅga* may cause doubts to arise in the minds of some, for some will wonder how Kṛṣṇadāsa, who was a *sevaka* who had received the favour of Shri Ācāryajī Mahāprabhu, could be enchanted by the singing of a whore. Further doubts may arise when one remembers that even the heavenly charms of beauties like the *apsarās*¹ fail to interest *bhaktas* like Kṛṣṇadāsa who are completely immersed in their love for Shri Thākurajī. And, on the topic of singers and prostitutes, Shri Ācāryajī wrote in his "Jalabheda" (one of the books included in the *Sodashagrantha*):

Singers who stay with prostitutes and other lowly people and become intoxicated and sing songs for their living are like dirty gutter water.²

In the above verse Shri Ācāryajī has pointed out the danger of associating with degraded people like *Bhāṭas*³ and *Domas*⁴ by saying that the songs sung by those lowly people, who live in the company of prostitutes, are like the water of the ditches in which pigs wallow and that the listening to those songs is like drinking and bathing in the water of such filthy ditches. So why was Kṛṣṇadāsa, a person of great wisdom and a defender of righteousness, delighted by the singing of a whore? How could Kṛṣṇadāsa, who had appeared for the instruction

¹JOHN DOWSON, *A Classical Dictionary of Hindu Mythology* (London: Routledge and Kegan-Paul, 1968), pp. 19–20.

²Verses 4–5 of Vallabhācārya's "Jalabheda" (the English translation is mine); see: SITĀRĀMA CĀTURVEDĪ, *Mahāprabhu Śrīmadvallabhācarya aur Puṣṭi-mārga* (Vārāṇasī: Hindi-Sāhiya-Kuṭīra, 1967), pp. 307–308.

³The Bhāṭa caste is a caste of professional bards.

⁴The *Domas* are an untouchable caste associated with the burning of human corpses, disposal of dead animals, and the playing of musical instruments.

and deliverance (*uddhāra*) of all people and who should be opposed even to looking at a fallen woman, be pleased by a prostitute? All doubt will be dispelled by the following information:

The prostitute's daughter was really a *daivī jīva*¹ who is in *līlā* a *sakhī* of Lalitājī named "Bahubhāśinī". One day, while Lalitājī was busy preparing food for Shri Thākurajī, she asked Bahubhāśinī to bring her some ground sugar candy. Bahubhāśinī filled a small jar with sugar candy and started back to Lalitājī. On the way, however, Bahubhāśinī stopped to talk with another *sakhī* and, in the course of the conversation, some of Bahubhāśinī's saliva fell into the container of sugar candy. Bahubhāśinī did not know that her saliva had fallen into the candy, so she went ahead and took it to Lalitājī. Lalitājī, however, is very alert and she perceived what had happened. She told Bahubhāśinī that the sugar candy would have to be discarded because a drop of her saliva had fallen into it. Whatever happens happens by the divine will. Bahubhāśinī answered Lalitājī in the following words:

"You are lying. No saliva has fallen into the sugar candy. Besides, Shri Thākurajī accepts left-over food from everyone in his circle of *sakhās*, so a little saliva in his food would not matter."

At this, Lalitājī said, "What do you know about Prabhu's *līlā*? Prabhu does whatever pleases and suits him. But you are impudent and have done something wilfully vile; therefore, you shall have to suffer a vile birth on earth."

Then Bahubhāśinī replied to Lalitājī, "You must take birth in the house of a Shūdra and save me. Where could I go without you?"

In this way, they cursed each other to take birth in the world. Lalitājī was born as Kṛṣṇadāsa in the house of a Shūdra and Bahubhāśinī was born in the house of a bawd. This would not be apparent to an ordinary (*laukika*) person. Kṛṣṇadāsa was sent by Shri Govardhanadhara to Āgrā to get that young prostitute. That is why the prostitute's song sounded so lovely to Kṛṣṇadāsa.]

While he was standing there enjoying the dancing and singing of the girl, Kṛṣṇadāsa thought to himself that the girl was certainly a *daivī jīva* and that she would be an excellent offering for Shri Govardhananāthajī. He felt that it would be good if Shri Govardhananāthajī himself would accept her. With these thoughts in mind, Kṛṣṇadāsa gave ten rupees to the whore and asked her to come that night to his residence. After Kṛṣṇadāsa had made this appointment with the girl, he went on to the house in which he stayed whenever he came to Āgrā and arranged for the oxcart to be loaded with supplies. Later, in the first period of the night, the

¹See p. 71 above in Part I.

prostitute arrived with her retinue and sang and danced for the pleasure of Kṛṣṇadāsa. When she had danced for a time, Kṛṣṇadāsa gave her a hundred rupees, told her that her figure, her singing, and her dancing were all superb, and said that if she should so desire she might accompany him to the house of his wealthy master (*seṭha*) at Govardhana. The prostitute thought to herself with delight of the money that she had already received and of the even greater amounts that she might expect to reap from Kṛṣṇadāsa's *seṭha* and said that she would be glad to go.¹ As soon as the prostitute got home that night, she had her cart prepared and packed with her musical instruments and other items necessary for her singing and dancing so that everything would be ready for her departure for Govardhana in the morning.

In the morning of the next day, the prostitute left with Kṛṣṇadāsa on the road to Mathurā. At noon on the second day after leaving Āgrā they reached Gopālapura at the foot of the sacred hill of Govardhana. There, Kṛṣṇadāsa had the whore bathe and dress herself in new clothing which he supplied. Kṛṣṇadāsa next taught the prostitute to sing a *pada* which he had carefully selected from among the *padas* that he himself had composed; he taught the prostitute to sing the *pada* in such a way that Śrī Govardhanadhara would be sure to hear it. Kṛṣṇadāsa did not take the prostitute up the sacred hill at the time of the *utthāpana darshana* period, but waited for the *bhoga darshana* period.² When it was time for the *bhoga darshana* to begin, Kṛṣṇadāsa led the prostitute and her party up the sacred hill to the temple of Śrī Nāthajī.

[*Bhāvaprakāsha*

Kṛṣṇadāsa waited until the *bhoga darshana* period to bring the prostitute to the temple because it is at that period, which comes after the *utthāpana darshana* period at which Śrī Nāthajī is awakened from his afternoon nap in the grove (*nikuñja*), that Śrī Nāthajī needs food offerings (*bhoga*) and so accepts all of the *bhaktas* who come to him on the roads of Braj. At this period, Śrī Nāthajī would, therefore, also accept the prostitute.]

As soon as the door of the temple had been opened for the *bhoga darshana*, the prostitute began to dance and then to sing the *pada* that Kṛṣṇadāsa had composed and taught to her and which begins: "My

¹For a vivid and entertaining description of the sort of ethical standards expected of prostitutes in Indian culture, see: J. A. B. VAN BUITENEN, *Tales of Ancient India* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1969), pp. 65-71.

²See pp. 48-49 of Part I above.

mind is engrossed in the splendour of Giridhara.”^{1,2} When the prostitute had finished singing the last line of the *pada*—“Kṛṣṇadāsa says, ‘I have sacrificed my life and laid down my head, my body, and all worldly existence’”—she suddenly collapsed and abandoned her earthly body to take up her divine body in *līlā*. As soon as the prostitute’s mother and her retinue realized that she was dead, they started to wail and to weep, crying that they would not be able to live without the girl who had been their means of support. Kṛṣṇadāsa came down to them and said, “What has happened cannot be undone; the girl reached the end of her allotted span of life. What can anyone do about it? Tell me what you need and I will give it to you.”

In the end, Kṛṣṇadāsa gave a thousand rupees to the prostitute’s mother and her people and sent them away. That is how Śrī Govardhanānāthajī, out of regard for Kṛṣṇadāsa, accepted the daughter of a prostitute. Kṛṣṇadāsa was a wonderful *Bhagavadiya*.

[*Bhāvaprakāsha*

One may well ask how the daughter of the harlot could attain *līlā* without having received the *Brahmasambandha*³ administered by Śrī Ācāryajī. This question can be answered in the following way. It is said that Śrī Ācāryajī was enshrined in the heart of Kṛṣṇadāsa; therefore, Kṛṣṇadāsa caused the prostitute to receive the *Brahmasambandha* from Śrī Ācāryajī by means of the *pada* that he taught to her. The primary human *dharma* is summed up in the rule that all mental attention should be centred on Śrī Kṛṣṇa; but, in wordly life the individual’s mind is fixed on his body, children, wife, and his own existence. Therefore, someone must cause the individual to dedicate himself to Śrī Kṛṣṇa. When an individual has turned everything over to Śrī Kṛṣṇa, then he has given up his individual existence and realized his existence with Prabhu. Such a person has understood that he is not different in essence from Śrī Kṛṣṇa. The significance of the first line of Kṛṣṇadāsa’s *pada*, “My mind is engrossed in the splendour of Giridhara,” is that the mind of the *bhakta* has given up everything but Śrī Thākurajī. When the prostitute repeated that line taught to her by Kṛṣṇadāsa, she received the *Brahmasambandha* from Śrī Ācāryajī.

One may still, nevertheless, doubt that any person could enter into *līlā* without the aid of a guru. It is true that Prabhu granted *darshana* to

¹The prostitute sang and danced in the courtyard in front of the temple: dancing is never allowed within any temple (*haveli*) belonging to the Vallabha *Sampradāya*.

²Giridhara (which means “the Bearer of the Mountain”) is one of the titles of Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

³See pp. 16–21 of Part I above.

Alī Khān¹ and then had Alī Khān and Alī Khān's daughter become his *sevakas*, but in the case under discussion the prostitute's daughter was not made a *sevaka* so cause for doubt remains. Shri Govardhana-nāthajī, on the subject of the *Brahmasambandha*, said to Shri Ācāryajī: "I will accept whomsoever you cause to take the *Brahmasambandha*." So, how can any person who has not been given the *Brahmasambandha* by either Shri Gusāñjī or Shri Ācāryajī Mahā-prabhu be received into *līlā*? Entrance into *līlā* is, furthermore, even more difficult to achieve than deliverance (*uddhāra*) from *samsāra*. The family of Shri Ācāryajī has increased just so that the gift of *Brahmasambandha* might be given to worthy *jīvas*. Shri Ācāryajī himself ordered his *sevakas* to promulgate the glory of the divine name among men, but he did not tell them to give the *Brahmasambandha*. The *Brahmasambandha*, therefore, may be given only by male members of Shri Vallabhācāryajī's family. The doubt that thus arises when it is said that the prostitute's girl left her earthly body and passed into *līlā* is dispelled in the following way. Lalitā and Shri Svāminīji are always present in *līlā*. Kṛṣṇadāsa, who is Lalitā in *līlā*, drew the prostitute's daughter out of the world and sent her into *līlā*. In *līlā* Shri Lalitājī caused that girl to be placed by Shri Svāminīji in *Brahmasambandha* and kept her in her service. She is Lalitājī's *sakhī*. That is the way that the whore's daughter received the *Brahmasambandha*; the same method was used by Shri Gusāñjī to cause the daughter of a Nāgara Brāhmaṇa living in Mathurā to receive the *Brahmasambandha* in *līlā*.]

Prasaṅga 6

One day, a large number of Vaiṣṇavas gathered and went to visit Kumbhanadāsajī. Kumbhanadāsajī had them be seated and then affectionately asked them, since they had shown such great favour in coming to him, to make some request of him. The Vaiṣṇavas then told Kumbhanadāsajī that they would like him to give them some instruction in the *Puṣṭimārga*. But Kumbhanadāsajī replied that they should consult Kṛṣṇadāsa the *Adhikārī* who was expert in the doctrines of the *Puṣṭimārga*. When the Vaiṣṇavas answered that they did not feel competent to ask Kṛṣṇadāsa, Kumbhanadāsajī said that he would go with them to Kṛṣṇadāsa and that he would ask the questions on their behalf. Then all of the Vaiṣṇavas went with Kumbhanadāsajī to visit Kṛṣṇadāsa.

[Bhāvaprakāsha

Kumbhanadāsajī would not give instruction to the Vaiṣṇavas

¹NIRĀJANADEVĀ SHARMĀ (ed.), *Dosau Bāvana Vaiṣṇavan ki Vārtā* (Mathurā: Shri Govardhana Granthamālā Kāryālaya, 1966), pp. 64–66.

because his mind was absorbed in secret *līlā*. How could he explain what he knew in love? In his *kīrtanas* he used esoteric language to describe *līlā*; a poet's particular area of proficiency may be known from his *kīrtanas*. Since Kṛṣṇadāsa would be able to explain doctrines clearly to the Vaiṣṇavas, Kumbhanadāsajī took them to Kṛṣṇadāsa.]

When Kṛṣṇadāsa saw all of the Vaiṣṇavas, he became very happy. He honoured them and had them sit down and sang them a *kīrtana*. Then he told them that he would like to repay them for the delight which they had given him by doing whatever they might ask him to do for them. Kumbhanadāsajī then said to him, "All of these Vaiṣṇavas want to hear about the doctrines of the *Puṣṭimārga*; please give them instruction. You have had direct experience of the *Puṣṭimārga*, so please have mercy on these Vaiṣṇavas and describe your experience of the *Puṣṭimārga* to them."

Kṛṣṇadāsa answered : "Kumbhanadāsajī! You are skilled in all things and you are a *Bhagavadīya* who has received the favour of Shri Ācāryajī; it is proper for you to teach the Vaiṣṇavas. You are great; what can I say in front of you? Nothing is concealed from you."

To this Kumbhanadāsajī replied, "I want you to tell them, Kṛṣṇadāsa. You are the supervisor over all of the *sevakas* and the affairs of the *sevakas* are your responsibility. You are the *adhikārī* of the *Puṣṭimārga*, so you must explain the principles of the *Puṣṭimārga* to these Vaiṣṇavas."

Then Kṛṣṇadāsa sang a *kīrtana* in which he described the inner significance of the *aṣṭākṣara* mantra—*Shri Kṛṣṇah sharanam mama*¹—and emphasized the importance of utterly renouncing wrong-doing and of remembering the *aṣṭākṣara* mantra every moment, night and day. Next, Kṛṣṇadāsa sang a *kīrtana* in which he explained the *pañcākṣara* mantra—*Kṛṣṇa tavāsmi*²—as the expression of the *bhakta*'s complete dedication of himself and all that belongs to him to Shri Kṛṣṇa, his divine master. When the Vaiṣṇavas had heard the two *padas* sung by Kṛṣṇadāsa, they were very pleased and told Kṛṣṇadāsa that he had received divine blessing that enabled him to dispel each doubt and describe the entire philosophy of the *Puṣṭimārga* in two *padas*. Then they returned to their homes. Kṛṣṇadāsa was a *Bhagavadīya* who had received the favour of Shri Ācāryajī.

¹The *aṣṭākṣara* (eight-syllabled) *mantra* is discussed on pp. 19–20 of Part I above.

²The *pañcākṣara* (five-syllabled) *mantra* (which is, in English, "Kṛṣṇa, I am yours") is an important part of the rite of self-dedication by which a new member enters the Vallabha Sampradāya. See HARIRĀYAJĪ's *Pañcākṣaramantragarbhastotram* in SHRĪMĀDHAVA SHARMĀ (ed.), *Puṣṭimārgiya Stotraratnamālā* (2 vols.; Vārāṇasi: Paramānanda Sharmā, 1963), vol. I, pp. 58–60.

Prasaṅga 7

Kṛṣṇadāsa was very fond of Gaṅgābāī Kṣatrānī.

[Bhāvaprakāśa]

In *līlā* Gaṅgābāī is a *tāmasī bhakta*¹ who belongs to the group led by Shrutiṛūpā. On earth, she was born in the city of Mathurā in the

¹The four divisions—which have already been described on pp. 73–75 in Part I above—into which Vallabhācārya classified the *puṣṭi-daivi-jīvas* (the *puṣṭi-daivi-jīvas* are those *daivi jīvas* that rely ultimately upon the grace of Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa and not upon their own efforts for their deliverance from *samsāra*) are: the category of the *shuddha* (pure) *puṣṭi jīvas* and the three categories of the *mishra* (mixed) *puṣṭi jīvas*. The *shuddha-puṣṭi-jīvas* were manifested out of Śrī Kṛṣṇa before the concealment of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's six divine virtues (these six virtues—called “*dharmas*”—are listed on p. 69 of Part I above) and so are not formed of the three material *guṇas* (the three *gunas* are *sattva*, *rajas*, and *tamas*—see p. 67 in Part I above) which are only partial and limited manifestations of the *ādhyātmika* nature of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Since these *shuddha-puṣṭi-daivi-jīvas* are free of all association with the three *guṇas*; they are termed “*nirguna*” (absolutely devoid of *gunas*) in Vallabhācārya's *Sampradāya*. The *mishra-puṣṭi-daivi-jīvas*, on the other hand, were manifested out of Śrī Kṛṣṇa after his concealment of his six *dharmas* and are formed of varying proportions of the three *guṇas*. Those *mishra-puṣṭi-daivi-jīvas* in which the *guṇa* of *sattva* (truth, purity, righteousness) predominates are called *puṣṭi-puṣṭi* or, in Braj Bhāṣā, *sātviki*, *jīvas*; those in which the *guṇa* of *rajas* (passion, vigour, self-reliance) is dominant are called *maryādā-puṣṭi* or, in Braj Bhāṣā, *rājasi* *jīvas*; and those in which the *guṇa* of *tamas* (dullness, darkness, lethargy) outweigh the other two are called *pravāha-puṣṭi* or, in Braj Bhāṣā, *tāmasī* *jīvas*. The *tāmasī jīvas*—in which group, according to HARIRĀYĀJĪ'S *Bhāvaprakāśa*, Gaṅgābāī Kṣatrānī belongs—are the least of the three kinds of *mishra-puṣṭi-daivi-jīvas* in capability for expression of *bhakti*; they are called “*tāmasī bhaktas*”.

A complex scheme has been developed within the Vallabha *Sampradāya* to account for the particular relationship that Vallabhācārya and Viṭṭhalanātha had with their followers and for the relationship that those followers had to the *daivi jīvas* in general. A simplified version of this scheme is as follows: The *daivi jīvas* have appeared on earth in 8,400,000 (i.e., 84 lakhs) different categories of living beings. The 84 (*caurāśī*) Vaiṣnavas who followed Vallabhācārya were manifested on earth in order to rescue these *daivi jīvas* from the categories into which they have fallen. All of these *daivi jīvas* are held by the followers of the doctrines of Vallabhācārya to be, if they are *puṣṭi-daivi jīvas*, in one of the four categories listed above—*nirguna*, *sātviki*, *rājasi*, and *tāmasī*. The *nirguna jīvas* are supposed to arise from the seven functions (the six *dharmas* of Śrī Kṛṣṇa plus *dharmī*—which is the virtue of the possession of the six *dharmas*) of the 12 parts (*āṅga*) of the body of Śrī Vallabhācāryajī. The parts and their functions correspond to the parts and functions of the divine body of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. The parts are: two feet, two arms, two thighs, a right hand, two pectoral muscles, the heart, the head, and a left hand (according to the *Tattvārtha-Dīpa-Nibandha*, *Sarvanirṇaya Prakarana* of Vallabhācārya, each of the parts of the body of Śrī Kṛṣṇa corresponds to one of the twelve *skandhas* of the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*). These *nirguna jīvas*, which are 84 (12 parts of the body times the seven functions) in number, were to be delivered from *samsāra* by Vallabhācārya (Śrī Ācāryajī); the *nirguna jīvas* express *nirguna bhakti*, which is that *bhakti* marked by total, selfless devotion to Śrī Kṛṣṇa for no motive but that of serving the divine being. This kind of *bhakti* is attainable through the grace (*anugraha*) of Śrī Kṛṣṇa only. The three kinds of *mishra puṣṭi daivi jīvas* are 252 (*dosau bāvan*) in number (84 times three categories) and were to be delivered from *samsāra* by Viṭṭhalanātha (Śrī Gusāñji).

house of a Kṣatriya; at the age of eleven she was married to the son of another Kṣatriya resident of Mathurā and had, in the course of her life, ten sons—one of whom died in childhood—and one daughter. At the proper time, Gaṅgābāī had her daughter married. When this daughter, who had been given a great quantity of very valuable jewellery, died, Gaṅgābāī manged, by giving a bribe to the governor of Mathurā, to acquire all of her jewellery, which was worth some hundred thousand rupees. As a result of the quarrels stemming from the matter of the jewellery, Gaṅgābāī, at the age of 55, came to the temple of Shrī Nāthajī on Govardhana Hill. There, she met Kṛṣṇadāsa and asked him to help her become a *sevaka* of Shrī Ācāryajī. When Kṛṣṇadāsa begged Shrī Ācāryajī to give spiritual protection to Gaṅgābāī, Shrī Ācāryajī told him that, although Gaṅgābāī was a *daivijīva*, Shrī Thākurajī was not at that time ready to accept her.¹ Kṛṣṇadāsa, however, continued to plead for her by saying that, if Shrī Ācāryajī would favour Gaṅgābāī, then Shrī Thākurajī would also relent and have mercy on her. Finally, Kṛṣṇadāsa's efforts were successful and Shrī Ācāryajī initiated Gaṅgābāī with the divine name and the rite of self-dedication.

Whenever Kṛṣṇadāsa, who was at that time in charge of collecting contributions for Shrī Nāthaji,² had to travel to distant regions, Gaṅgābāī would return to Mathurā, but whenever Kṛṣṇadāsa would come back to Govardhana Hill, she would pack up her belongings and move from Mathurā to Govardhana Hill. Kṛṣṇadāsa fastened Gaṅgābāī Kṣatrānī's attention on the divine *dharma*. Twice, he even sent the *prasāda* from Shrī Nāthajī to Gaṅgābāī's house. Since Gaṅgābāī was very fond of eating and drinking, Kṛṣṇadāsa had very attractive and tasty food offered to Shrī Nāthajī (which would become the *prasāda* taken by Gaṅgābāī and the other *bhaktas*). Kṛṣṇadāsa explained the divine *dharma* to Gaṅgābāī Kṣatrānī. Kṛṣṇadāsa had Gaṅgābāī attend all of the *darshanas* of Shrī Nāthajī; because

These *jīvas* practise either *sāttvika bhakti*—in which the *bhakta* maintains the ritual commands of the Vedas and lives according to social laws while he practises his devotion; or *rājasa bhakti*—in which the *bhakta* practises his devotion because of desire for fame, power, or physical possessions; or *tāmasa bhakti*—in which the *bhakta* performs his devotions with feelings of pride, jealousy, and anger. See HARIRĀYAJĪ, *Caurāsi Vaiṣṇavan...*, p. 1. CIM-MANALĀLA HARISHANKARAJĪ, *Puṣṭimārgopadeshikā*, trans. into Hindi by SHRĪMĀDHAVA SHARMĀ (Vārānasi: Shrīmādhava Sharmā, 1941), pp. 132–133. VISHVĀNĀTHA SHUKLA, *Hindi Kṛṣṇa Bhakti Kāvya por Shrimadbhāgavata kā Prabhāva* (Aligarh: Bhāratā Prakāshana Mandira, 1966), pp. 69–70, 89–90.

¹ Although Vallabhācārya did eventually initiate Gaṅgābāī, because she was a *tāmasī bhakta* and not a *nirguna bhakta* she is not one of Vallabhācārya's 84 *sevakas*; see note 1, p. 237.

² See *prasaṅga I* of Kṛṣṇadāsa's *Vārtā* above.

of Gaṅgābāī's association with Kṛṣṇadāsa, her mental attitude became *alaukika*.]

One day, while Śrī Gusāñjī was offering the food for the *rājabhoga darshana* period to Śrī Govardhananāthajī, Gaṅgābāī's sight fell on the food-offering; consequently, Śrī Govardhananāthajī would not eat the *rājabhoga* food offering.¹ At the end of the *rājabhoga darshana* period, Śrī Gusāñjī left the temple. The *bhitariyās* and *sevakas* and Śrī Gusāñjī himself all took the *prasāda* from the *rājabhoga* food-offering and ate it. After a time, Śrī Govardhananāthajī came to the place where Rāmadāsa the chief *bhitariyā* was napping and awakened him with a kick. Rāmadāsa woke up and fell face-down before Śrī Govardhananāthajī. Rāmadāsajī was amazed when Śrī Govardhananāthajī informed him that he was famished, for Rāmadāsajī knew that Śrī Gusāñjī had offered Śrī Govardhananāthajī food at the *rājabhoga darshana* period only a short time before. Then Śrī Govardhananāthajī explained to Rāmadāsajī that he had not been able to eat any of the *rājabhoga* offering because Gaṅgābāī had seen the food before it had reached him. When Rāmadāsajī had explained the situation to Śrī Gusāñjī, Śrī Gusāñjī told him that both of them and all of the *bhitariyās* would have to bathe and then return to the temple of Śrī Nāthajī. At the temple, they prepared more rice and pulse to be offered to Śrī Govardhananāthajī. By the time that the new *rājabhoga* food-offering had been made ready, it was already time for the *bhoga darshana* food-offering to be prepared. Therefore, Śrī Gusāñjī decided that the *bhoga* offering would be prepared and presented to Śrī Nāthajī along with the new *rājabhoga* offering. On that day, the *rājabhoga* offering and the *bhoga* offering were given at the same time. After the offering of the food, Śrī Gusāñjī put some of the rice and pulse in a jar and went to the bottom of the hill where he distributed this *prasāda* among the *sevakas*. When each of the *sevakas* had had some of the *prasāda*, Śrī Gusāñjī himself ate a little of it and went to sleep. Later, the *sevakas* commented on the tastiness of the *prasāda* to Śrī Gusāñjī; Śrī Gusāñjī told them that the *prasāda* had been so wonderfully delicious because Śrī Nāthajī had been so hungry that he had eaten his food with unusual relish. Then Kṛṣṇadāsa, who was standing nearby, said: "Mahārāja! You watched over the preparation of the food offering and then you ate part of it as *prasāda*, so there is no wonder that it is so delicious."

¹The food offered to the divine *svarūpa* in a *haveli* of the Vallabha *Sampradāya* must be absolutely untainted by any contact—including visual contact—with any individual except a purified *bhitariyā* or a male member of Vallabhācārya's family. Furthermore, every individual, without exception, is forbidden to see the *svarūpa* take the food offering.

Shrī Gusāñjī replied from his holy mouth, "The food offering is tasty because of what you have done."

[*Bhāvaprakāsha*

Shrī Govardhananāthajī did not eat the food offering. Shrī Gusāñjī himself had offered the food and he had had water and a towel brought to Shrī Govardhananāthajī so that he might rinse his mouth after eating and then dry his hands and face. Then Shrī Gusāñjī had offered *pān*¹ to Shrī Govardhananāthajī. But why didn't Shrī Gusāñjī know that Shrī Govardhananāthajī had not eaten the *rājabhoga* food offering and why didn't Shrī Govardhanadhara² say that he had not eaten the *rājabhoga* food offering when Shrī Gusāñjī offered him *pān*? And why did Shrī Govardhananāthajī tell Rāmadāsa the *Bhitariyā* rather than Shrī Gusāñjī, who actually made the offering and was, besides, the guru of the *Sampradāya*, that he was hungry? These difficulties are dispelled in the following paragraphs:

On that day, Shrī Govardhananāthajī knew that Giridhara³ had allowed Sobhābeṭī⁴ to provide a great feast for Shrī Navanītāpriyājī at his temple in Gokula. Shrī Govardhananāthajī decided to leave his temple on Girirāja and go to Gokula to enjoy the feast. After a time, Giridhara and Sobhābeṭī realized that another divine *svarūpa*—which was Shrī Govardhananāthajī—had arrived and was partaking of the food offering. Thus, Giridhara, on account of the desire of Sobhābeṭī to give a lavish feast for Shrī Navanītāpriyājī, caused the *bhaktas* who were present to experience wonderful devotional delight. As soon as Shrī Govardhananāthajī had finished eating, he returned to his temple on Govardhana Hill. There, Shrī Svāminījī asked him, where he had been, for the food offering had been completed, all the *sevakas* had already eaten the *prasāda*, and Shrī Gusāñjī had lain down for his nap.⁵ Shrī Govardhananāthajī answered that he had been to a great feast offered by Giridhara at the request of Sobhābeṭī.

¹ *Pān* is a preparation made of a nut of the betel palm mixed with lime and any number of other ingredients and wrapped in a leaf of the *pān* vine and then chewed. Indians are especially fond of taking *pān* after meals.

² The names Shrī Govardhananāthajī and Shrī Govardhanadhara are, as has been noted above, used interchangeably for the primary *svarūpa* of Vallabhācārya's *Sampradāya*.

³ See note 1 on p. 124 above.

⁴ Sobhābeṭī was one of the four daughters of Shrī Gusāñjī Viṭṭalanātha; she was a *bhakta* of the *svarūpa* called Shrī Navanītāpriyājī. See: SHRĪKRŚNAPRIYĀ BEṬĪJĪ MAHĀRĀJA (ed.), *Pāṭhya-Pustakā, Prathama Varṣa ke Hetu* (Vārāṇasi: Shrī Rādhāmohana Vidyā-mandira, 1957), p. 6.

⁵ A *svarūpa* of Shrī Svāminījī (i.e., Rādhā) is always seated beside the *svarūpa* of Shrī Govardhananāthajī.

When Shri Svaminiji had heard the description of the feast, she felt a deep yearning to enjoy a similarly bountiful food offering—even though the *rājabhoga* food offering had just been finished. So, in order to have a second *rājabhoga* offering made, she said to Shri Nāthaji: "Please go to Rāmadāsa and tell him that Gāngābāī Kṣatrāṇī looked at the food offering before it had been offered."

The purpose behind all of this was the fulfillment of a particular curse, which had been made in the eternal divine world of *līlā*, by which Shri Gusāṇiji was to be forced to suffer separation (*viyoga*)¹ from Shri Thākuraji² for a period of six months. This curse, which was the source of a countercurse and an important vow, came about in the following way: Once in *līlā*, Shri Candrāvalijī³ overheard Shri Thākuraji promising Lalitājī⁴ that he would go to the grove (*nikunja*) with her. In order to keep Shri Thākuraji from leaving her to carry out his promise to Lalitājī, Shri Candrāvalijī served Shri Thākurajī with all of her wiles and charms so that he entirely forgot about going to Lalitājī's house for a whole six months. During those six months, Lalitājī endured the misery of separation (*viraha*)⁵ from Shri Thākurajī. When Shri Svaminiji found out about Lalitājī's suffering, she summoned Lalitājī and the two of them went to see Shri Thākuraji. Shri Svaminiji said to Shri Thākurajī: "Since you have made my *sakhī* Lalitā suffer *viraha* for six months, you are now obligated to attend solely to her for an equal space of time; furthermore, Candrāvalijī, who caused such sorrow for my *sakhī*, is going to have to bear the grief of six months of being deprived of your *darshana*." When Shri Thākurajī had heard the words of Shri Svaminiji, he remained silent.

Candrāvalijī soon learned of the curse given by Shri Svaminiji. She outlined the situation to one of her *sakhīs* in the following words: "Shri Svaminiji and Shri Thākurajī are exalted beings and no one can dispute with them. But, Lalitā, who is only a *sakhī*, has misled them. Lalitā is, as a matter of fact, my *sakhī* as much as she is Shri Svaminiji's *sakhī*. Moreover, in causing Shri Svaminiji to curse me to six months without *darshana* of Prabhu, Lalitā has actually harmed Shri Svaminiji herself."

Shri Candrāvalijī could say that a curse placed on her would harm Shri Svaminiji because Shri Candrāvalijī was manifested from the

¹See p. 91 of Part I above.

²Shri Thākuraji is Shri Kṛṣṇa; see note 5 on p. 106 above.

³Shri Candrāvalijī is the first and chief *sakhi* of Shri Svaminiji; on earth, Shri Candrāvalijī appeared as Vallabhācārya's second son Viṭṭalanātha.

⁴Lalitā appeared on earth as Kṛṣṇadāsa.

moon-like mouth of Shrī Svāminījī—who, in turn, was made manifest by Shrī Thākurajī. It is from Shrī Candrāvalījī herself that all of Shrī Svāminījī's *sakhis* are manifested. Shrī Candrāvalījī sits on the right side of Shrī Thākurajī and is the foremost of all of the *sakhīs* of Shrī Svāminījī.

Shrī Candrāvalījī went on to say to her *sakhī* that, since Lalitā had caused her to be cursed, Lalitā herself would have to take birth on earth and then suffer an untimely death which would be followed by existence as a ghost (*preta*)¹ on earth. Furthermore, Shrī Candrāvalījī said that neither Shrī Thākurajī nor Shrī Svāminījī would be able to release Lalitā from her foul *preta* existence. When one of the *sakhis* had told her about Shrī Candrāvalījī's curse, Lalitājī began to tremble with dread. As soon as she had recovered a bit, she ran to Shrī Svāminījī and threw herself at her feet. She told Shrī Svāminījī everything. Shrī Svāminījī then called Shrī Thākurajī and informed him that Shrī Candrāvalījī had put an awful curse on Lalitājī and that, since Lalitājī had cast herself on his mercy, he must help her. Shrī Thākurajī decided that the three of them should go to talk with Shrī Candrāvalījī about the matter. When they reached Shrī Candrāvalījī's house, Shrī Candrāvalījī stood up and very respectfully welcomed Shrī Thākurajī and Shrī Svāminījī. Shrī Candrāvalī had Shrī Thākurajī and Shrī Svāminījī seated on high and honoured seats, then she worshipped them with deep affection, then she offered them fine and delicious food followed by *pān* and, finally, after all the food and *pān* had been served, she stood humbly before them with her hands folded. Both Shrī Thākurajī and Shrī Svāminījī were very favourably impressed with Shrī Candrāvalījī's display of reverent affection; they each took her by the hand and had her sit down with them. Then, Shrī Svāminījī said: "Candrāvalījī, your love for us is very *alaukika*. There is no difference between you and us, so Lalitā is your *sakhī* as much as she is our *sakhī*. Now, please release Lalitā from the curse that you have placed upon her."

Then Shrī Candrāvalījī replied, "Since Lalitā is my *sakhī*, the curse that I have placed upon her cannot be removed; Lalitā will take birth upon earth so that *lilā* may be performed there. When she has become a *preta*; then I will myself come and save her.² This is my sincere vow."

¹A *preta* is the spirit of a dead person that has neither been liberated from *samsāra* nor been able to pass on to a new birth. A *preta*, which usually animates a corpse, is both cruel and miserable. See: DOWSON, p. 242. ALAIN DANIELOU, *Hindu Polytheism* (New York: Bollingen Foundation, 1964), p. 311.

²Candrāvalījī's exact words in the Braj Bhāṣā text are: "So yaha Lalitā preta hoyagi tāko maiñ hi uddhāra karūngī." In English this would be: "When Lalitā has become a *preta*, then I myself will deliver her (from that vile form of existence and restore her to the divine *lilā*)."

As soon as Shri Candrāvalījī had said this, Lalitā fell at her feet and said, "I have sinned against you and I have got what I deserved."

Then, Shri Svāminījī said, "Everyone of us here will become manifest on Girirāja in the *Kali Yuga* for the performance of *lilā*."

When Shri Thākurajī, Shri Candrāvalijī, Lalitā, and all of the *sakhis* and retainers who were present had heard the words of Shri Svāminījī, they all became very pleased. Thus, in the divine world of *lilā* there is *alaukika* love, there are *alaukika* curses, and there is *alaukika* jealousy,¹ but none of these are created by *Māyā*. The curses and the jealousy that are *alaukika* are done only so that the divine glory may appear on earth and so that the *jīvas* on earth may sing of the divine *lilā* and so find Prabhu. One must be very careful to distinguish the *alaukika* curses and jealousy from the *laukika* curses and jealousy; *laukika* curses and *laukika* jealousy are evil and sinful and are never found in the divine world of *lilā*. This is how Shri Thākuraji, by the will (*icchā*) of Shri Svāminījī,² came to be manifested on Govardhana Hill in the earthly Braj; Shri Svāminījī herself appeared as Shri Ācāryajī Mahāprabhu and revealed the presence of Shri Govardhanadhara on Govardhana Hill³ Just as, in the divine *lilā*,

¹The *alaukika* jealousy in this account was the jealousy felt by Shri Candrāvalijī when Shri Thākurajī promised to spend six months with Lalitājī.

²Shri Thākurajī and Shri Svāminījī are the same, Shri Svāminījī being the power (*shakti*) of Shri Thākurajī (see Part I, pp. 90–91).

³Vallabhācārya's revelation of Shri Govardhanadhara is described in Part I above on pp. 28–29. Since Vallabhācārya in his own writings never refers to himself as being a manifestation of Shri Svāminījī, the tradition of Vallabhācārya's identity as Shri Svāminījī must have been either a doctrine taught by Vallabhācārya as esoteric knowledge or, as seems more likely, a doctrine introduced by Vallabhācārya's son Viṭṭhalanātha or by Vallabhācārya's grandson Gokulanātha. It is very important to notice the similar identification made by members of the Caitanya *Sampradāya* of Kṛṣṇa Caitanya as a manifestation of Rādhā or of Rādhā and Shri Kṛṣṇa in the ecstasy of union. There was certainly close, though not always friendly, contact between Vallabhācārya and his followers and the headquarters of the Caitanya *Sampradāya* at Brindāvana, not far from Govardhana Hill.

S. K. De describes the association of Rādhā with Caitanya in the following words:

If Caitanya is to be regarded as Kṛṣṇa himself, it was found necessary to explain how Kṛṣṇa's dark colour became transformed in Caitanya into a golden hue. Again, Caitanya's ecstatic feeling of divine love for Kṛṣṇa in an almost feminine role of mystically erotic passion also required explanation. It was, therefore, imagined, in accordance with the Mādhurya theory of the school, that Kṛṣṇa, in order to relish the supreme taste of his own Mādhurya as it was relished by his most beloved Rādhā, assumed the feelings as well as the beauty of Rādhā [who was light in complexion], so that the two became one in Caitanya. . . . If it was a fact that Caitanya, for his emotional devotional purposes, imagined himself as Rādhā, it was only a step that he came to be regarded by his disciples as Rādhā herself incarnated. See: DE, p. 427.

Although they must have been well aware of the association of Rādhā with Caitanya, the six Gosvāmis of Brindāvana, who both led the Caitanya *Sampradāya* and provided it with its philosophical and theological foundation, say nothing about it in their works. The idea of the association of Rādhā and Caitanya was formally set forth in the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* of Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja, written in Bengālī about A. D. 1615. See: DE, pp. 428, 438.

Candrāvalījī was manifested by Shrī Svāminījī, so, on earth, Shrī Gusānijī was manifested (i.e., begotten) by Shrī Ācāryajī. Lalitā became Kṛṣṇadāsa the *Adhikārī*. There are several *svarūpas* of Shrī Govardhanadhara; of these, two exist continually. One of the two that exist continually is the *svarūpa* that was revealed by Shrī Ācāryajī Mahāprabhu atop Govardhana Hill and is still there today¹ and the other is the *svarūpa* that is called “the Savior (*uddhāraka*) of the Bhaktas.”² This second *svarūpa* gives joy to all the *bhakta*s and has even played with such great *bhakta*s as Kum-bhanadāsa and Govindasvāmī. Wherever there are *Bhagavadīyas*, there one may have experience of this second *svarūpa*.

Now, let us return to the discussion of that time when Shrī Gusānijī was offering the *rājabhoga* food offering to Shrī Govardhananāthajī and Gaṅgābāī Kṣatrānī saw the food offering. Why was it that Shrī Govardhananāthajī did not eat that food offering when he was well aware that by his refusal to eat the food he would cause sin to fall on the *sevakas* who would unknowingly eat food that had not first been accepted by him?³ In the temples belonging to Shrī Ācāryajī, the *svarūpa* is assumed to eat whatever is offered to him. Shrī Govardhananāthajī did not eat the food for the following reason: At that time Shrī Svāminījī said to Shrī Govardhananāthajī, “Shrī Gusānijī has to suffer separation (*viyoga*) from you for six months, so point out Gaṅgābāī as being the one who kept you from accepting the food offering. When Shrī Gusānijī penalizes Gaṅgābāī, for whom Kṛṣṇadāsa has deep affection, then Kṛṣṇadāsa will be filled with anger and he will desire to do something wicked to Shrī Gusānijī. As a result of the wickedness which Kṛṣṇadāsa will do, Shrī Gusānijī will be separated from you for six months. So, please go and say that you are hungry.”

Then Shrī Nāthajī went to Rāmadāsa, who knew nothing about the curses and vows made in *līlā*, and told him that he was hungry. When Rāmadāsa relayed this information to Shrī Gusānijī, Shrī Gusānijī thought to himself, “Gaṅgābāī has seen the food to be offered to Shrī Nāthajī; that matter which was begun in *līlā* by Kṛṣṇadāsa and me is now going to be settled by the will (*icchā*) of Shrī Nāthajī. Now, the *sevā* that is to be done must be done with love, for it has become very difficult to do *sevā*.”

¹The *svarūpa* referred to is the *svarūpa* called Shrī Govardhananāthajī which is physically apparent to anyone.—The *svarūpa* was later moved from Govardhana Hill to its present location in Nāthadvāra, Udaipur district, Rājasthān.

²The *svarūpa* referred to here is perceptible only to those *bhakta*s who have received special divine favour.

³Members of the Vallabha *Sampradāya* are to receive nothing, not even food, that has not first been taken by Shrī Kṛṣṇa. See verse 5 of Vallabhācārya’s “Siddhantarahasyam” quoted on p. 185 of Part I above.

Shrī Gusāñjī bathed and had a new *rājabhoga* food offering prepared and offered along with the *bhoga* food offering. When the offering had been made and the *āratī* ceremony had been completed and the sanctuary of the temple had been closed, Shrī Gusāñjī again thought to himself about how difficult it had been that day to obtain the *darshana* and the *prāśāda* of Shrī Govardhananāthajī. With these thoughts in his mind, Shrī Gusāñjī put some of the rice from the large container that had been used for the food-offering ceremony into an earthen jar and then carried the jar down the sacred hill where the *sevakas* were waiting to receive the *prasāda*. After all of the *sevakas* had taken some of the *prasāda*, Shrī Gusāñjī himself had some of it. When the *sevakas* praised the taste of the *prasāda*, Kṛṣṇadāsa, by the will (*icchā*) of Bhagavān, said sarcastically, “Mahārāja! You watched over the preparation of the food offering and then you ate a part of it as *prasāda*, so there is no wonder that it is so delicious. You had the food offering prepared not for the delight of Shrī Nāthajī but for your own pleasure in eating it later as *prasāda*.”

In reply to Kṛṣṇadāsa’s gibe, Shrī Gusāñjī said: “The food offering is tasty because of what you have done. As a matter of fact, you have done two things that have led up to the performance of two *rājabhoga* food offerings today and to the appearance of especially delicious *prasāda*. First of all, you allowed Gaṅgābāī Kṣatrānī, whom you love, to sit in a place where she could see the *rājabhoga* food offering; without your permission she could never have sat in such a place. And, secondly, in *līlā* it was you who caused Shrī Svāminījī to curse me. Now, you are going to have to suffer the fate that was set for you in *līlā*.”]

When Kṛṣṇadāsa had heard the words of Shrī Gusāñjī, evil thoughts began to enter his mind. He considered, for example, how he might bar Shrī Gusāñjī from *darshana* of Shrī Nāthajī. Kṛṣṇadāsa arranged to meet with Puruṣottamajī, the only son of Shrī Gusāñjī’s deceased elder brother Shrī Gopināthajī, as the opening move of the plan against Shrī Gusāñjī that he finally decided to adopt. “Why,” Kṛṣṇadāsa asked Puruṣottamajī when they met, “have you, the son of Shrī Ācāryajī’s elder son, been sitting here silently when it is your rightful duty to take care of the *śringāra* and all of the other *sevā* of Shrī Govardhananāthajī? And why,” he continued, “have you allowed Shrī Gusāñjī to put everything concerning the worship of Shrī Nāthajī under his own authority?” Kṛṣṇadāsa finished by assuring Puruṣottamajī that he and not Shrī Gusāñjī was entitled to the leadership of the *Sampradāya*.

Although Puruṣottamajī objected that he did not feel able to carry on a dispute with Shrī Gusāñjī, Kṛṣṇadāsa insisted that Puruṣottamajī bathe, accompany him up the sacred hill to the temple, and begin performing-

ing the *shṛṅgāra* and all the other *sevā* of Shrī Nāthajī inside the temple. Finally, Kṛṣṇadāsa's arguments won over Puruṣottamajī's hesitation and, after bathing, Puruṣottamajī went with Kṛṣṇadāsa up the hill to the temple about an hour before the *utthāpana darshana* period. Puruṣottamajī seated himself within the temple, but Kṛṣṇadāsa stationed himself at Dāṇḍotī Crag on the side of the hill. When Shrī Gusāñjī, who had also purified himself by bathing, came past Dāṇḍotī Crag on his way up the hill to the temple, Kṛṣṇadāsa stopped him and said to him: "Puruṣottamajī has bathed and entered the temple. He is now the leader of the *Sampradāya*; therefore, you may ascend the hill only when he summons you. Now you may not come up the hill and you may not have *darshana* of Shrī Govardhanadhara."

Shrī Gusāñjī said nothing to Kṛṣṇadāsa, but he prostrated himself towards the banner atop Shrī Nāthajī's temple and, remembering the curses and vows that had been made in *lilā*, got up and moved off in the direction of Parāsolī¹ where he intended to dwell while undergoing separation (*viyoga*) from Shrī Nāthajī.

[*Bhāvaprakāsha*

Shrī Gusāñjī did not go to Gokula where the temple of Shrī Navanītapriyajī was located because Shrī Svāminijī had decreed that he must be separated from her and from Shrī Thākurajī for a period of six months. If he had gone to Gokula, he would have violated Shrī Svāminijī's decree since Shrī Navanītapriyajī is a *svarūpa* of Shrī Thākurajī. Consequently, Shrī Gusāñjī passed the entire six month period of separation at Parāsolī.]

There was a window in Shrī Govardhananāthajī's temple that faced towards Parāsolī; Shrī Govardhananāthajī made a practice of sitting in that window whenever Kṛṣṇadāsa left the temple so that he could give *darshana* to Shrī Gusāñjī. All day long, Shrī Gusāñjī used to sit in Parāsolī staring at that window in Shrī Govardhananāthajī's temple. One day when Kṛṣṇadāsa was in the village of Ānyora² he happened to notice Shrī Govardhananāthajī seated in the window. Early on the following morning, Kṛṣṇadāsa came into the temple and examined the window. After he had carefully looked over the window, Kṛṣṇadāsa said to Shrī Nāthajī, "I have forbidden Shrī Gusāñjī to have *darshana* of you, so why have you been sitting at that window? You must never even look towards Shrī Gusāñjī." Kṛṣṇadāsa would not, furthermore, allow Shrī Nāthajī to play in the direction of Parāsolī.

¹See note 1 on p. 134 above.

²GROWSE, pp. 83, 301–302. MĪTALA, *Braj kā Sāyaskṛtika Itihāsa*, p. 110.

Shrī Gusānijī, however, while remaining at Parāsoli, still managed to communicate with Shrī Nāthajī. Every day after the *rājabhoga darshana* period during the six months of Shrī Gusānijī's separation from Shrī Govardhanadhara, Rāmadāsa the chief *bhītariyā* used to bring the holy water in which Shrī Nāthajī's feet had been bathed¹ to Shrī Gusānijī at Parāsoli. In return, Shrī Gusānijī would give Rāmadāsa one of the flower garlands which he himself made each day and would ask him to place it around Shrī Nāthajī's neck. These flower garlands were the means by which Shrī Gusānijī was able to communicate with Shrī Govardhanā-nāthajī; for in each flower garland Shrī Gusānijī concealed a piece of paper on which he had written a Sanskrit *shloka* for Shrī Nāthajī. As soon as possible after Rāmadāsa had put the garland around Shrī Nāthajī's neck, Shrī Nāthajī would take out the hidden piece of paper and read Shrī Gusānijī's *shloka*. In order to answer Shrī Gusānijī, Shrī Nāthajī would write with the juice from his own chewed *pān* on his *pān* leaf and send it with Rāmadāsa to Shrī Gusānijī.² As soon as Rāmadāsa had given him the *pān*, Shrī Gusānijī would read what was written on it, then dip the leaf in water to dissolve the writing on it, and then chew the *pān*. That is why the *shlokas* composed by Shrī Nāthajī do not exist in the world. As for the *shlokas* written by Shrī Gusānijī for Shrī Nāthajī, Shrī Nāthajī gave them to Rāmadāsa after he had read them. Rāmadāsaji carefully preserved these *shlokas*; later they were gathered together to form a collection called *Vijñapti* which is today considered by members of Vallabhācārya's *Sampradāya* to be one of the foremost pieces of literature produced within their *Sampradāya*.³

One day, when Shrī Gusānijī was feeling especially deep sorrow (*viraha*) because of his separation from Shrī Nāthajī, he wrote the following *shloka*:

For one who belongs to you, O Lord, but is deprived of your
darshana,

Life is as useless as renewed youthful vigour would be for

¹One of the common forms of Hindu worship is the drinking of the water—which is called “*caranāmṛta*”—in which a deity's feet have been bathed.

²It would not seem at all strange to a Vaiṣṇava that Shrī Nāthajī's “chewed” *pān* was taken to Shrī Gusānijī, for the *pān* that has been offered to a deity is taken as *prasāda* by the deity's *bhaktas*. Claims that members of the Vallabha *Sampradāya* also took as *prasāda* *pān* that had been chewed by one of the gurus or *mahārājas* (direct descendants of Vallabhācārya) of the sect were used against the sect in the famous “Mahārāj Libel Case” that was heard in the Bombay Supreme Court in 1862. See: [KARSANDAS MULJI], *History of the Sect of Mahārājas or Vallabhāchāryas in Western India* (London: Trübner and Co., 1865), pp. 107 (in the main text) and 64 (in the appendix).

³BHAI MANILAL C. PAREKH, *Sri Vallabhacharya: Life, Teachings and Movement* (Rajkot: Sri Bhagavata Dharma Mission, 1943), pp. 304–306.

Durbhagā.¹

Rāmadāsa took the *shloka* to Shrī Govardhananāthajī and Shrī Govardhananāthaji, after he had read it, sent this reply to Shrī Gusāñjī : "Everyone knows that a raincloud will always give rain in the proper season; similarly, you and I both know that we can meet again as soon as the time allotted to Kṛṣṇadāsa is finished. So, forget your grief and be patient for our time of union is approaching."

Rāmadāsajī took Shrī Nāthajī's message and gave it to Shrī Gusāñjī. As soon as Shrī Gusāñjī had read what Shrī Nāthajī had written, he composed another Sanskrit *shloka* to be delivered by Rāmadāsajī to Shrī Govardhanadhara. This *shloka* went as follows :

It is indeed the nature of the raincloud to release its rain in season,
But the *cātaka* bird still continues to lament, for it is exhausted
and suffers pain and cannot rest patiently.

By saying that the season would come when the rain would fall from the raincloud² Shrī Gusāñjī meant that he knew that the time would eventually come when he would be reunited with Shrī Nāthajī; and, by referring to the *cātaka* bird, which drinks only raindrops and so suffers terrible thirst during the dry season when there is no rain, Shrī Gusāñjī meant to remind Shrī Govardhananāthajī that he loved him and needed him just as the *cātaka* bird loves and needs the raincloud and that he could not suffer patiently any more than the *cātaka* bird can suffer its thirst without crying aloud.³ Such suffering in separation from the divine being, is, after all, the *dharma* (i.e., the duty, obligation, correct mode of conduct) of a *bhakta*.

Rāmadāsajī was not the only one who regularly went to visit Shrī Gusāñjī, for all of the *sevakas* continued to go to Parāsolī for *darshana* of Shrī Gusāñjī. Kṛṣṇadāsa knew about all of this visiting but he could not prevent it. Once, however, Kṛṣṇadāsa did try to keep Rāmadāsajī from carrying letters back and forth between Shrī Nāthajī and Shrī

¹Durbhagā (who is also called Jarā—Old Age) is the daughter of Kāla (Time). It is Durbhagā in Indian mythology who enfeebles men and makes them old and decrepit. The story of Durbhagā is told in *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* IV, 27–28. See : KRISHNA-DWAIPAYANA VYASA, *The Srimad-Bhagavatam*, trans. J. M. SANYAL (5 vols.; Calcutta : Oriental Publishing Co., 1952), Vol. II, pp. 135–143.

²The raincloud is a symbol of Shrī Kṛṣṇa who is as dark and soothing as a rain-filled thunderhead at the end of the hot season. Since the rainy season is in Indian tradition the season of union for lovers, it has come to symbolize the time of the spiritual union of the *bhaktas* and Bhagavān in Vaiśnava literature.

³The image of the mythical craving of the *cātaka* bird (pied-crested cuckoo) for the raincloud is a very common one in Vaiśnava poetry. See: SĀLIM ALI, *The Book of Indian Birds* (Bombay: Bombay Natural History Society, 1964), p. 50.

Gusāñjī. But, when Kṛṣṇadāsa told Rāmadāsajī that he objected to his role in the transmission of messages from Shrī Nāthajī to Shrī Gusāñjī and from Shrī Gusāñjī back to Shrī Nāthajī, Rāmadāsa answered that, even if he were removed from his position as chief of the *bhūtariyās*, he would never stop going to have *darshana* of Shrī Gusāñjī and Kṛṣṇadāsa had to let the matter drop. Kṛṣṇadāsa could not take the chance of losing a superb *sevaka* like Rāmadāsajī.

Shrī Gusāñjī was separated from Shrī Nāthajī from the sixth day of the light half of the month of Pauṣa until the fifth day of the light half of the month of Āśāḍha.¹ On the fifth day of the light half of the month of Āśāḍha, Rājā Birabala arrived in Gokula and asked Shrī Gusāñjī's eldest son Giridharajī, who was in charge of Shrī Gusāñjī's household while Shrī Gusāñjī was staying at Parāsoli, where Shrī Gusāñjī was. Rājā Birabala had not had *darshana* of Shrī Gusāñjī for some time and so was very anxious to see him. When Giridharajī explained that Shrī Gusāñjī had been barred by Kṛṣṇadāsa the *Adhikārī* from attending the *darshana* of Shrī Govardhananāthajī and had been suffering his separation from Shrī Nāthajī for the past six months at Parāsoli, Rājā Birabala swore that he would go and have Kṛṣṇadāsa evicted from Shrī Nāthajī's temple without delay. Rājā Birabala went at once to Mathurā, where he had official jurisdiction in criminal cases, and ordered some of his men to go immediately to Govardhana and arrest Kṛṣṇadāsa. Rājā Birabala's men reached Govardhana in the evening, placed Kṛṣṇadāsa under arrest, and returned with him to Mathurā. At midnight, Birabala sent a messenger to Gokula to tell Giridharajī that Kṛṣṇadāsa had been jailed in Mathurā and that Shrī Gusāñjī should be quickly reinstated in the temple of Shrī Govardhananāthajī. That very night, Giridharajī mounted his horse and set off for Parāsoli. At dawn on the sixth day of the light half of the month of Āśāḍha, Giridharajī reached Parāsoli, respectfully greeted his father, and asked him to come back to Shrī Govardhanadhara's temple to resume authority over the divine *sevā* and *shṛṅgāra*. When Shrī Gusāñjī had heard the words of his son, he asked if it were Kṛṣṇadāsa's order that he return to the temple. Giridharajī then told Shrī Gusāñjī that Kṛṣṇadāsa had been imprisoned in Mathurā. Upon receiving this news, Shrī Gusāñjī was stricken with sorrow that such misfortune and hardship should befall Kṛṣṇadāsa who was a *Bhagavadiya* and a *sevaka* of Shrī Ācāryajī Mahā-prabhu and who had received the favour of Shrī Ācāryaji. Shrī Gusāñjī then asked Giridharajī what he had told Rājā Birabala and Giridharajī answered that he had told him no more than that Kṛṣṇadāsa had barred Shrī Gusāñjī from the *darshana* of Shrī Nāthajī. Shrī Gusāñjī then vowed that he would eat nothing until Kṛṣṇadāsa had been released and allowed

¹Pauṣa corresponds to December-January and Āśāḍha corresponds to June-July.

to come to him. At this, Giridharajī again mounted his horse and rode to Mathurā to tell Bīrabala that his father would not eat until Kṛṣṇadāsa was allowed to go to him in freedom.

When Rājā Bīrabala had received Shrī Gusānijī's request that Kṛṣṇadāsa be released, he went to the jail and had Kṛṣṇadāsa summoned. When Kṛṣṇadāsa appeared before him, he said : "Kṛṣṇadāsa, listen ! Since Shrī Gusānijī has had mercy on you and said that he will not eat unless you are allowed to go to him, I am going to let you go ; but, if you ever again quarrel with Shrī Gusānijī, I will capture you and never release you." After Bīrabala had warned Kṛṣṇadāsa in this way, he released him into the custody of Giridharajī. Giridharajī then took Kṛṣṇadāsa with him to Parāsoli.

When Shrī Gusānijī recognized Kṛṣṇadāsa coming, he stood up to give the polite greeting due to Kṛṣṇadāsa as Shrī Govardhananāthajī's *adhikāri*. Upon seeing Shrī Gusānijī's noble gesture, Kṛṣṇadāsa felt pangs of remorse and threw himself humbly at Shrī Gusānijī's feet. Then Kṛṣṇadāsa sang a *pada* in praise of Shrī Gusānijī and begged Shrī Gusānijī to forgive him for the evil that he had done and to return to the *sevā* of Shrī Govardhananāthajī. Shrī Gusānijī answered that he would return since Kṛṣṇadāsa had commanded him to do so and the two of them went together back to the temple of Shrī Govardhananāthajī. When they reached the temple, Shrī Gusānijī prostrated himself before Shrī Govardhanadhara. At the *shrigāra darshana* period, since it was the hot season, Shrī Nāthajī was dressed in a light *dhotī*¹ a small cap, and a garland of *kusuma* flowers. Then the *rājabhoga*, the *utthāpana*, and all the other *darshana* periods were conducted by Shrī Gusānijī. After the final *darshana* period in the evening, Shrī Gusānijī reconfirmed Kṛṣṇadāsa as Shrī Nāthajī's *adhikārī* by placing the mantle of that office upon him in the presence of Shrī Nāthajī. Shrī Gusānijī then said that Kṛṣṇadāsa was blest and Kṛṣṇadāsa sang a *pada* in praise of the mercy of Shrī Gusānijī. But, when Kṛṣṇadāsa again asked Shrī Gusānijī to forgive him for his wicked behaviour, Shrī Gusānijī would say only that Shrī Nāthajī would forgive him for his crimes. Later, when the temple sanctuary had been closed, Shrī Gusānijī gladdened all of the Vaiṣṇava *sevakas* by declaring a general reconciliation. He ordered, furthermore, that the *sevā* and *shrigāra* of Shrī Govardhanadhara be conducted as usual and that Kṛṣṇadāsa continue to perform his accustomed *sevā* as the *adhikārī* of the temple. Thus was Kṛṣṇadāsa a *Bhagavadiya* who had received special favour.

Prasāṅga 8

One day, when Shrī Gusānijī was in Gokula, Kṛṣṇadāsa came from

¹A *dhotī* is a wide unsewn piece of cloth that many Indian men wear wrapped and tied around the waist.

Govardhana Hill to Gokula to visit him. When Shri Gusāñjī saw Shri Govardhananāthaji's *adhibāri* approaching, he got up, greeted him very warmly and cordially, and had him sit down beside him. After Shri Gusāñjī had asked Kṛṣṇadāsa for news about the health and general condition of Shri Govardhanadhara, he fed him, from his own holy hand, the *prasāda* of Shri Navanītāpriyaji. Later, Shri Gusāñjī had Kṛṣṇadāsa take the *prasāda* from the food offering at the *shayana darshana* period and then showed him to a comfortable couch on which he was to pass the night.

At daybreak, Kṛṣṇadāsa prepared to leave Shri Gusāñjī's house. But, when Kṛṣṇadāsa told Shri Gusāñjī that he intended to go to Brñdāvana, Shri Gusāñjī became very disturbed and told him that nothing but misfortune would result if he really were to go to Brñdāvana.¹ Nevertheless, Kṛṣṇadāsa's desire to go to Brñdāvana made him disregard Shri Gusāñjī's warning and he went ahead and crossed the Yamunā.² Kṛṣṇadāsa got to Brñdāvana at noontime, the hottest period of the day, and arranged to meet with some of the saints and religious leaders of that town.³ Suddenly, however, a fever seized Kṛṣṇadāsa, parching his throat and causing him to suffer from a fierce and violent thirst. He cried out at once to the assembled saints and religious leaders that he was suffering from a terrible thirst and that his throat had completely dried up. The saints and religious leaders offered to get water, but Kṛṣṇadāsa, who had sat down by himself on a cart, said that he could accept drinking water only from a Vallabhī Vaiṣṇava from Gokula.⁴ Upon being informed by the saints and religious leaders of Brñdāvana that, while there was not a single Vallabhī Vaiṣṇava in the town, there was a sweeper from Gokula who was visiting his wife's family in Brñdāvana, Kṛṣṇadāsa said that a Gokula sweeper would be the best of all the possible alternatives.⁵

¹Shri Gusāñjī did not want Kṛṣṇadāsa to go to Brñdāvana because Brñdāvana was a centre for many different sects but not for the Vallabha *Sampradāya*. As has already been discussed on pp. 40–41 of Part I above, the members of the Vallabha *Sampradāya* were supposed to avoid association with the members of other sects. In the first *prasaṅga* of this *vārtā* Kṛṣṇadāsa himself was shown as a staunch supporter of this doctrine of sectarian exclusiveness.

²Brñdāvana is about six miles north of Gokula and on the opposite bank of the Yamunā River.

³The majority of these saints and religious leaders were probably connected with the Cañanya *Sampradāya*, which was the leading Vaiṣṇava sect in Brñdāvana.

⁴A member of Vallabhācārya's *Sampradāya* is called a Vallabhī Vaiṣṇava.

⁵Normally, a *shūdra* like Kṛṣṇadāsa would not accept water from so lowly and polluted a person as a sweeper (whose caste is considered by Hindus to be one of the untouchable castes); but, because of the restrictions on association with outsiders observed by members of the Vallabha *Sampradāya*, Kṛṣṇadāsa preferred to take water from a sweeper—if the sweeper were from the Vallabhī settlement of Gokula—rather than from high-caste people who did not belong to the Vallabha *Sampradāya*.

Kṛṣṇadāsa asked that the Gokula sweeper be told first to get a new, unused earthen vessel from a potter, then to bathe in the sacred Yamunā,¹ and, finally, to fill the vessel with water and bring it to him. The Gokula sweeper was summoned and sent with Kṛṣṇadāsa's instructions to get the water.

Meanwhile, Śrī Gusāñjī had finished the *sevā* of the *rājabhoga darshana* of Śrī Navanītapriyajī and had decided to visit Śrī Nāthajī's temple on Govardhana Hill. He had just gotten across the Yamunā and stepped up onto the *ghāṭa* when the Gokula sweeper, keeping his mouth covered with a piece of cloth,² called out to him and told him that he had just been sent to fetch water for Kṛṣṇadāsa who was in an agony of thirst in Brīndāvana. When Śrī Gusāñjī had heard the sweeper's words, he quickly had his servant fill a jug with water and mounted his horse and set off for Brīndāvana with the water. Śrī Gusāñjī found Kṛṣṇadāsa seated in misery on the cart and gave him the water from the jug that he had brought. As soon as Kṛṣṇadāsa had drunk the water, his fever disappeared and he began to revive. When he felt better, he fell down before Śrī Gusāñjī and sang a *pada* praising Śrī Gusāñjī. Then Kṛṣṇadāsa said to Śrī Gusāñjī: "Mahārāja! I ignored your warning and, as a result, I suffered misfortune just as you said I would."

Śrī Gusāñjī and Kṛṣṇadāsa departed for Śrī Govardhananāthajī's temple together and arrived there just before time for the *shayama darshana*. Śrī Gusāñjī bathed and conducted the *sevā* of the *shayana darshana* and Kṛṣṇadāsa sang a *pada*. Then Śrī Gusāñjī had the temple sanctuary closed and went down from the sacred hill. Kṛṣṇadāsa served as *adhikārī* of the temple for a very long time.³

Prasaṅga 9

One day, a Vaiṣṇava came to Kṛṣṇadāsa and said: "As an act of piety, I would like to have a well constructed here; but, since I must return to my own country, I will not be able to stay here to have the well built. Therefore, I would be very pleased if you would let me give you some money to be spent on constructing a well." Kṛṣṇadāsa accepted 300 rupees from the Vaiṣṇava for the building of the well and the Vaiṣṇava departed for his own country. When the Vaiṣṇava had left, Kṛṣṇadāsa took a hundred rupees out of the 300 rupees that he had been given and

¹The vessel had to be new and unused so that there would be no chance of its having been used previously by someone not associated with the Vallabha *Sampradāya*. The sweeper had to purify himself by bathing in the sacred Yamunā before he could take the water to Kṛṣṇadāsa.

²The sweeper covered his mouth when addressing Śrī Gusāñjī, who was a *Brāhmaṇa*, so that his breath would not pollute him.

³This *prasaṅga*, in which Kṛṣṇadāsa's thirst (i.e., his desire for the true path to liberation) can be quenched only by water (i.e., the *Puṣṭimārga*) brought by Śrī Gusāñjī, is a good example of the allegorical *prasaṅgas* found in the *Caurāsi Vaiṣṇavan ki Vārtā*.

put them into a clay pot and buried the pot under a mango tree in a garden. Later, on a day deemed auspicious for new undertakings, Kṛṣṇadāsa had the construction of the new well begun in a garden near the village of Pūcharī.¹ After several days of labour, when the well had almost been completed and lacked only the protective brick wall around its lip, Kṛṣṇadāsa found that he had already paid out 200 rupees of the Vaiṣṇava's money to the workmen. Kṛṣṇadāsa realized that a fine, solid wall could be built with the remaining hundred rupees of the Vaiṣṇava's money that he had buried under the mango tree. Just after he had attended Shrī Govardhanadhara's *utthāpana darshana* period, Kṛṣṇadāsa took up his staff and went over to Pūcharī to inspect the new well. While examining the well, Kṛṣṇadāsa leaned on his staff on the edge of the well where the protective wall should have been. Suddenly, the staff slipped off the edge and into the well and Kṛṣṇadāsa plunged in after it. When the workmen saw Kṛṣṇadāsa fall into the well they began to shout for rope and soon two men were being lowered on a stout rope down into the well. Although the two men searched diligently, they were unable to find Kṛṣṇadāsa's body.²

Meanwhile, Shrī Gusānijī had finished conducting Shrī Govardhanadhara's *shayana darshana sevā* and was relaxing outside the temple with Rāmadāsa the *Bhitariyā*. All at once, a man came running up from the direction of Pūcharī and told Shrī Gusānijī that Kṛṣṇadāsa had fallen into the new well and that his body could not be recovered. When Rāmadāsajī heard this news, he stood up saying in Sanskrit: “*Tāmasānāma-dhogatiḥ*” (Thus do those who are full of *tamas*³ always go down.). When Shrī Gusānijī heard what Rāmadāsajī had said, he rebuked him, “Rāmadāsajī, don't say such a thing. Kṛṣṇadāsa was a Vaiṣṇava who had received the favour of Shrī Ācāryajī Mahāprabhu and who has a place in the divine *līlā*. What makes you think that you know why Kṛṣṇadāsa fell into the well?”

[*Bhāvaprakāsha*

Shrī Gusānijī knew, of course, about the curse because of which Kṛṣṇadāsa would have to become a *preta* and so he was not surprised to hear that Kṛṣṇadāsa's body could not be found in the well. Kṛṣṇadāsa had, at that very moment, become a *preta* in his own body and was sitting in the branches of a large *pīpala* tree growing near Pūcharī.⁴

¹MĪTALA, *Braj kā Sāṃskṛtika Itihāsa*, p. 111.

²According to Indian beliefs, any violent death jeopardizes the safe passage of the soul into a new birth; but, if the body of a person who had died violently cannot be recovered and given the proper rites, then it is almost certain that the soul of that person will become a *preta*.

³See p. 67 of Part I above and note 1, p. 235, in this *vārtā*.

⁴In India, *pretas* and other malignant spirits are said to live in haunted trees.

Prasāṅga 10

When Śrī Gусāñjī heard about Kṛṣṇadāsa's fatal accident he was deeply saddened and said from his holy mouth, "Kṛṣṇadāsa was an excellent *adhikārī* of Śrī Govardhanadhara's temple; how shall I ever be able to find a *sevaka* as suitable as he was? Furthermore, the temple routine cannot continue without an *adhikārī*."

When Rāmadāsajī had listened to Śrī Gусāñjī talk in this way, he suggested that Śrī Gусāñjī simply appoint someone to be the *adhikārī* and that person would then perform the duties of the office—after all, the person entrusted with the care of the *sevā* of Śrī Govardhanānāthajī would consider himself blessed. To this, Śrī Gусāñjī said, "But, I want to avoid any possibility of a dispute over the person selected to be *adhikārī*. It is easy to cause disagreement, but it is very difficult to bring about concord."

[*Bhāvaprakāsha*

Śrī Ācāryajī approached just this problem of finding the person with just the right talent and ability (*adhikāra*) for a position in his *Subodhini* commentary on the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* where he describes the following series of gods and sages through which the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* passed before it was received by an individual who had the ability (*adhikāra*) to realize its sublime teachings. "Nārāyaṇa transmitted the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* to Brahmā, but Brahmā's talent lay in the creation of the universe. Next, Brahmā transmitted it to Nārada but Nārada's area of skill is in moving about in all countries of the world and not in understanding the doctrines of the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*. Then, Nārada transmitted it to Vedavyāsa, but Vedavyāsa could not profit from it because his talent was in the compiling of the holy scriptures. Vedavyāsa transmitted it to Shukadeva, who had completely renounced the worldly life and who persisted steadfastly in his renunciation. Later, Parīkṣita also gave up the world. Night and day for seven days Shukadeva taught the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* to Parīkṣita and Parīkṣitā became the *adhikārī* of the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*. The *Puṣṭimārga* is just like the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*. The *Puṣṭimārga* is inscribed on the forehead of the person who has given up all worldly desires to make himself the *adhikārī* of it. But, if anyone should become proud because of his comprehension of the *Puṣṭimārga*, then his comprehension shall do him no good."]

Over and over Śrī Gусāñjī repeated to himself, "To whom should I give the position of Śrī Govardhanadhara's *adhikārī* and yet stay away from discord?" After the completion of the *shayana darshana* period,

Shrī Gusāñjī turned to Shrī Govardhanadhara himself and asked : "Mahārāja! Kṛṣṇadāsa has died and *sevā* cannot go on without an *adhikārī*. Whom should I designate to be *adhikārī*? Tell me whom to choose and I will follow your command."

Shrī Govardhananāthajī answered Shrī Gusāñjī in the following words : "How can I disapprove of the person whom you select ? But you want to avoid quarrels that others may make over your choice. You can accomplish this by selecting the new *adhikārī* in this way : Have all of the *bhaktas* assemble and then tell them that you will give the position of *adhikārī* to anyone who will volunteer to put on the *adhikārī's* mantle."

This suggestion pleased Shrī Gusāñjī and he decided to carry it out on the following day. Then he put Shrī Govardhananāthajī to bed for the night. On the following day, at the time of the *rājabhoga darshana* period, when all of the Brajavāsi Vaiṣṇavas were assembled, Shrī Gusāñjī stood up with the *adhikārī's* mantle in his hands and said to everyone present : "Let anyone who wishes to be the *adhikārī* of the house of Shrī Nāthajī wrap himself in this mantle." Upon hearing these words, several people stood up and called out that they would undertake the duties of *adhikārī*; but the first man to accept the position was a Kṣatriya and he was given the mantle of the *adhikārī* of the temple. As soon as the new *adhikārī* had been selected, Shrī Gusāñjī performed the *sevā* of the *rājabhoga darshana* and then closed the sanctuary and returned to Gokula.

One day, several days after the selection of the new *adhikārī*, one of the female water buffaloes belonging to Shrī Govardhananāthajī got loose and wandered away. A cowherd named Gopināthadāsa and six or seven other cowherds all went off in the direction of Pūcharī in search of the missing buffalo; all of these cowherds were *Bhagavadiyas* who had received supreme favour. As they were walking along looking for the buffalo, they suddenly noticed that Shrī Govardhananāthajī was playing with some of his *sakhās* under a *pipala* tree near Pūcharī; furthermore, they saw Kṛṣṇadāsa the *Adhikārī*, now a *preta*, sitting on that very tree. Then Kṛṣṇadāsa called out "Victory to Shrī Kṛṣṇa!"¹ in greeting to Gopināthadāsa and then asked him, "Brother ! Please relay the following message of mine to Shrī Gusāñjī :

Because of the crime that I committed against you, I have become a *preta*; nevertheless, by your mercy, Shrī Govardhanadhara has given me *darshana*. Please go to the garden that is over by Bilachū²

¹"Victory to Shrī Kṛṣṇa!" (*jai Shri Kṛṣṇa!*) is a common Vaiṣṇava greeting and general exclamation. Kṛṣṇadāsa, since he was a *preta*, probably also wanted to reassure Gopināthadāsa and the other cowherds by calling out the divine name.

²See pp. 134–135 above.

and dig underneath a large mango tree growing there. After you have dug for a time, you will find a pot and in the pot will be a hundred rupees. Please take the hundred rupees and have a protective brick wall built around the lip of the well into which I fell.

Please tell all of this to Shrī Gusānijī. You will find the female buffalo that you are looking for grazing in that brush over there."

[*Bhāvaprakāsha*

When Shrī Gusānijī reconfirmed Kṛṣṇadāsa as Shrī Govardhananāthajī's *adhikārī* and, in the presence of Shrī Nāthajī, placed the *adhikārī*'s mantle for the second time on Kṛṣṇadāsa, Kṛṣṇadāsa sang a *pada* with the following first line: "Most merciful Shrī Viṭṭhalanāthajī, the son of Shrī Vallabha, has shown favour and put his own hand on my forehead. . . ." After Kṛṣṇadāsa had sung that *pada*, he begged Shrī Gusānijī to forgive him for the crime of having caused him to be separated from Shrī Govardhananāthajī for six months. Shrī Gusānijī answered Kṛṣṇadāsa by saying that Shrī Nāthajī would forgive him for his crime. And, just as Shrī Gusānijī had promised, Shrī Govardhanadhara came to Kṛṣṇadāsa after he had become a *preta* and gave him *darshana* and talked with him. But, since Shrī Gusānijī himself had never forgiven Kṛṣṇadāsa, Kṛṣṇadāsa could not be released from his existence as a *preta*. Kṛṣṇadāsa, indeed, had asked Shrī Govardhanadhara: "Mahārāja! You have given me *darshana*, so why can't you release me from this awful *preta* existence?" In reply to Kṛṣṇadāsa, Shrī Govardhananāthajī said, "The matter is not in my hands; your salvation (*uddhāra*) is the responsibility of Shrī Gusānijī." Even though Kṛṣṇadāsa was Lalitā, a *sakhī* of Shrī Svāminijī, Shrī Nāthajī could not free him from his existence as a *preta*. Since it was Shrī Gusānijī who, as Shrī Candrāvalijī, had, in *līlā*, put the curse of existence as a *preta* on Kṛṣṇadāsa, only Shrī Gusānijī could give him freedom from that curse. Kṛṣṇadāsa, since he could be released only by the grace of Shrī Gusānijī, sought Shrī Gusānijī's pardon through the message quoted above which he entrusted to Gopināthadāsa the cowherd.]

After Gopināthadāsa had received Kṛṣṇadāsa's message to Shrī Gusānijī, he went to get the buffalo from the brush where she was grazing. Gopināthadāsa and his companions then drove the buffalo back to Gopālapura and locked her in the corral. Later, when Shrī Gusānijī had finished conducting Shrī Nāthajī's *shayana darshana sevā* and had come down from the holy mountain, Gopināthadāsa came before him, prostrated himself, and gave him Kṛṣṇadāsa's message. When Shrī Gusānijī

had heard the message, he decided that Kṛṣṇadāsa had suffered enough sorrow and that it was time for him to be freed from his existence as a *preta*. First, Śrī Gusāñjī went to the garden named by Kṛṣṇadāsa and dug up the hundred rupees that Kṛṣṇadāsa had buried there and, secondly, he gave the hundred rupees to the new *adhikārī* and told him to use the money to have a protective wall built around the well into which Kṛṣṇadāsa had fallen. Finally, that very night Śrī Gusāñjī set out for Mathurā and, at dawn on the next day, he performed the *shrāddha* rites for Kṛṣṇadāsa with his own hands on Dhruva Ghāṭa in Mathurā.¹ Upon the performance of the *shrāddha* rites, Kṛṣṇadāsa was freed from his *preta* existence and was able to take up a divine body and resume his place in the eternal *līlā*. There is a gateway into Girirāja at Bilachū and Kṛṣṇadāsa is the master of that gateway. As soon as he had been restored to *līlā*, Kṛṣṇadāsa stationed himself at that gateway. In this way, Śrī Gusāñjī enabled Kṛṣṇadāsa to enter *līlā*.

[*Bhāvaprakāsha*

Some may ask why Kṛṣṇadāsa could not have been freed by the grace of Śrī Gusāñjī alone. Such people will wonder why Śrī Gusāñjī needed to perform the *shrāddha* ceremony for Kṛṣṇadāsa if he had already had mercy on Kṛṣṇadāsa. Why, these people will ask, wasn't Śrī Gusāñjī's grace alone sufficient to save Kṛṣṇadāsa? There are two reasons why Śrī Gusāñjī wanted to perform the *shrāddha* ceremony for Kṛṣṇadāsa. The first of these reasons is explained in the following paragraph.

In front of all the *sevakas* and Brajvāsīs. Gopināthadāsa told Śrī Gusāñjī that Kṛṣṇadāsa had become a *preta* and that Kṛṣṇadāsa was entreating him to release him from that foul existence. Śrī Gusāñjī realized that, if he were to release Kṛṣṇadāsa by his grace alone, then the *sevakas* would ask him to similarly release any Brajvāsī who might become a *preta*; if, however, he were not to release such a Brajvāsī *preta*, then bad feeling and trouble would be sure to result. Therefore, Śrī Gusāñjī made it seem that he had to perform the *shrāddha* rites on Dhruva Ghāṭa in Mathurā in order to free Kṛṣṇadāsa. When all the people saw that Śrī Gusāñjī went to Dhruva Ghāṭa to perform the *shrāddha* rites for Kṛṣṇadāsa, then they began to say that *ghāṭa* was the very best place for the *shrāddha*.

¹The *shrāddha* rites are commemorative offerings given by Hindus for the nourishment of dead ancestors. The first *shrāddha* offerings must be made together with the funeral ceremonies for a deceased person, for, until the first *shrāddha* offering is made, the deceased will have to exist as a *preta*. For a discussion of the *shrāddha* rites, see: MONIER-WILLIAMS, p. 1097. For a general survey of Hindu funeral ceremonies, see: RĀJABALĪ PĀNDEYA, *Hindū Saṃskāra* (Vārāṇasi: Chowkhamba Vidyabhawan, 1966), pp. 296–346.

rite to be done. For the above reason Shri Gusāñjī went to great difficulty to conceal his own ability to grant Kṛṣṇadāsa release.

The second reason is quite different from the first. Kṛṣṇadāsa was such an outstanding *Bhagavadiya* that millions of his ancestors received deliverance (*uddhāra*) from *samsāra* by virtue of his wonderful *bhakti*. It will be recalled that, in the story of Prahlāda in the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*, Prahlāda asked Nṛsiṁhajī, "Mahārāja! Can my father also be delivered?" and Nṛsiṁhajī answered, "Since you are a *bhakta* of Bhagavān, the previous 21 members of your family—which would include, of course, your father—will be delivered from *samsāra*."¹ Now, Prahlāda was only a *maryādā bhakta*;² a *Puṣṭimārgī Bhagavadiya* like Kṛṣṇadāsa would bring deliverance to millions of his forebears. Nevertheless, no one may enter into *līlā* without first taking the *Brahmasambandha* rite taught by Shri Ācāryajī Mahāprabhu; therefore, Kṛṣṇadāsa's ancestors could not enter into *līlā* and had to receive the *shrāddha* ceremony in order to be liberated (*mukta*).

Kṛṣṇadāsa, Shri Gusāñjī, and all of the retinue of Shri Govardhanadhara are *alaukika*. They feel no *laukika* jealousy. The divine *līlā* has been described as it was played out by them on earth.]

Thus, Kṛṣṇadāsa's *vārtā* is *alaukika*. Shri Gusāñjī himself said: "Kṛṣṇadāsa composed wonderful *kīrtanas* describing *rāsa* and the other *līlās*; there will never be another *bhakta* to equal Kṛṣṇadāsa; no one will ever be such a perfect *sevaka* of Shri Ācāryajī as he was; no one will ever be able to perform *sevā* in the way that he performed *sevā*; and no one will ever be able to match him as Shri Nāthajī's *adhikārī*." Kṛṣṇadāsa the *Adhikārī* was a *Bhagavadiya* who had received the favour of Shri Ācāryajī. Shri Govardhananāthajī was always delighted with him. A full account of the *bhāva* of Kṛṣṇadāsa's indescribable *vārtā* can never be given.

¹Prahlāda, though the son of a demon king, was a staunch *bhakta* of Viṣṇu; just as Prahlāda was about to be killed by his father for his devotion, Viṣṇu incarnated himself as a being half man and half lion (called "Nṛsiṁha") and slew the demon father. For the full story, see the following: VYASA, (trans. SANYAL), vol. III, pp. 11–53.

²A *maryādā bhakta* is a *bhakta* who continues to rely upon the performance of Vedic rituals and the observance of scriptural laws along with his devotion to his god; in other words, the *maryādā bhakta*—unlike the *puṣṭi bhakta*—still believes that his actions have some influence over the granting of *uddhāra*. The *maryādā bhakta* is thus at a lower level of the practice of *bhakti* when compared with a *puṣṭi bhakta*.

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